

NOTES OF RETREATS

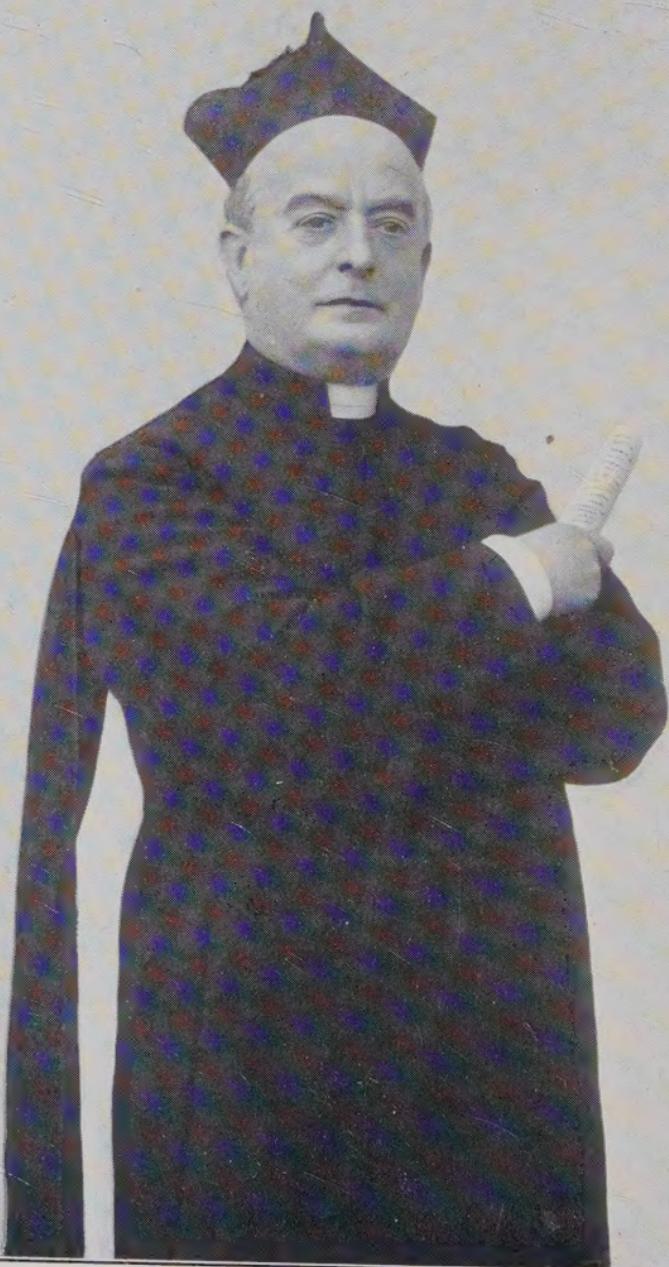
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NOTES OF RETREATS



FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN

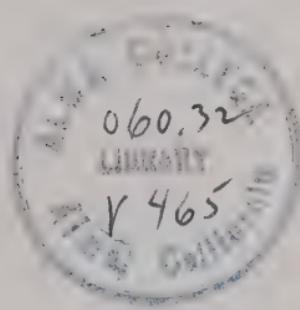
NOTES OF RETREATS

GIVEN BY

FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN, S.J.

RECORDED FROM THE NOTES OF

CAROLINE LADY PAGET



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PREFACE

THE following notes were taken for my own personal use only and without any idea of their future publication. Father Bernard Vaughan, S.J., has been dead some years, but he is still mourned and is unforgotten. It is hoped that these simple meditations, which were spoken from his very heart, may help to show how he drew souls to realize that love of our dear Lord which burnt in his own heart so ardently.

That his words, though now presented only by my feeble pen, may still appeal with some of their wonted force is the earnest hope with which I venture to offer them to my readers.

C. I. PAGET
(E. DE M.).

October, 1928.

FOREWORD

THE late Father Bernard Vaughan is best remembered by the world at large as an eloquent preacher in the pulpit and as an impassioned speaker on the platform, who, by his own characteristic gifts, could always and everywhere attract and hold a large and attentive audience. The *Notes of Retreats* gratefully gathered for private use and now generously given for the benefit of all, manifests another, and perhaps truer, aspect of his richly endowed soul. Herein he is dealing more directly with the individual character, leading and encouraging each hearer to seek God's appointed path, to remove the obstacles which the world and self may have built up, and then to go forward generously to the now clearly perceived goal. In so doing he reveals the motives, the strivings, and the longings of his own earnest nature.

All who knew him and cherish his memory will be thankful for this record of days and words which might else become forgotten. Many who heard him will find in these Notes the echo of his voice awakening in their minds the thought of graces for which thanksgiving has not yet been offered, or of resolutions long forgotten

and still to be fulfilled. May they accomplish now the purpose which he desired and intended when he uttered the words which they recall.

FRANCIS, CARDINAL BOURNE.
Archbishop of Westminster.

FEAST OF S TERESA,
October, 15, 1928.

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NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT CONVENT
OF THE SACRED HEART, ROEHAMPTON
(MAY 12-19, 1909)

FIRST DAY

THE pagan said: "Let me know myself." The Christian says: "Lord, teach me to know thee, and then to know myself." The great thing is to learn to know our Lord. We are but insignificant creatures, not much worth knowing, and we spend too much time in thinking about ourselves.

This Retreat should help us to know our Lord better. He is under the same roof with us. We have this inestimable blessing, and he is far more anxious to help us than we are to know him. During this Retreat we have the chance of getting ready to meet him, so that whenever the summons comes for us to go home, and the bell is rung, we may be ready and prepared. Some of you may hope to be getting ready for marriage, not for death. Very well! But all the same, wherever you are and whatever you are doing, get ready to obey the Master's call.

If a thought comes to you, seize it. It may be that the whole Retreat may, for you, be summed up in a few words. If so, and if you make the most of it, it will be well. Ask our Lady to pray for us that the few days in which we devote ourselves to her Son may be blessed to us. Perhaps there may be for each of you some special blessing for which you would like to ask.

For myself, I want to have a splendid death, and that when the hour comes I may meet it grandly. You may have other things to ask for, but, whatever they are, now is the time.

Be generous in spirit during this Retreat. Do not grumble at the hours, or the food, or the restrictions, and do not be critical of your Director.

Let there be nothing small and petty in the frame of mind and the spirit in which you enter upon the Retreat.

Follow the lead which God gives you, like Joan of Arc, who said that wild horses would not have dragged her from home if the voice of God had not called her, and remember that if you truly wish to be led by him, "neither death nor life nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

SECOND DAY : I

I want you to-day to think a little about your Origin and your Destiny.

1. We belong inalienably and irrevocably to God.
2. We depend entirely upon him for everything.

There are things in life which we look upon as our own; there are even some things of which we consider ourselves to be the "creators." An artist's picture is spoken of as his "creation"; sculptors' and poets' works the same. But for the production of all these things borrowed materials have to be used. An artist could do very little without a canvas, and when he has a canvas he still needs colours, brushes, light, perhaps

models, and then inspirations. These are all borrowed. A sculptor could not do much without his block of marble. Michael Angelo and Dante produced their wonderful works, and Shakespeare his, but the materials were all borrowed.

God alone creates out of nothing, and we are his creatures, the work of his hands.

We depend upon him for everything. All our senses are derived from him. Our hearing, sight, speech, are all under his control, and all should be constantly employed in his service and to his glory. He can withdraw them from us at any moment. A stroke comes, and then all the doctors and specialists in the kingdom can avail nothing unless God wills.

The tongue is an unruly member which we do not keep under sufficient control. If a blister formed on our tongue each time we spoke unkindly, or if we were unable to draw it back into our mouth, we should realize how often we offend and how much we abuse our powers of speech.

We admit that it is our duty to love God, and our neighbour as ourselves; yet how far we fail in carrying this out!

We do not act up to the petition in the Lord's Prayer—"Forgive us our trespasses *as we forgive them.*" We don't forgive completely enough if we have been offended or injured. We are apt to say: "Yes, I forgive him; but all the same, he did it!" That is not a thorough forgiveness, and it is not the measure of forgiveness which we hope to obtain. We depend upon God, as S Paul said, "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me," and without God we can do nothing.

That was what Joan of Arc felt. God called her, so she was ready to go to the ends of the earth at his bidding. This girl, this child, who knew nothing and could do nothing, whose only experiences had been to help her father and mother in their simple peasant life, was ready, because God wanted her and called her, to lead armies and to save her country. She said herself that "at God's call she would, if necessary, wear her feet to her knees," and she died at last in the fiery flames with the name of Jesu on her lips.

Where God wants you there is your place and your work. Don't move an inch from where you are. Do not imagine that you are wanted to become nuns. God has too much respect for the community. Where you are, there is your proper place and your work. Let your life be filled with the thought that you belong to God. As a sponge is saturated with water, so let your life be full of God—to overflowing—every action to be influenced by him. Catholics who have been brought up from childhood with this ideal can realize this; they have a monopoly of the good things of religion—all hall-marked, sterling value. In this they have an advantage over non-Catholics. Let your life be so full of the realization of the fact that you belong to God, that no one can come near you without being the better for it, and the benefits which you, as it were, "give off" will be replaced with fresh stores of grace for you. Do not allow the poor, useless, petty things of life to take an undue place of importance—shops, dress, hats, motors, things which please the senses. How trivial they are, and how unimportant compared to God! Happy are those who care for none of these things and whose wants are few. Politics,

social matters, pedigree, descent, position, are things which take an important place with some of us. So in our childhood did the toy soldiers and paper boats which we played with in the nursery. Even Dreadnoughts are, after all, small matters in comparison with God. If God wills, we shall smash the Kaiser; if he wills the contrary, the Kaiser will smash us. It all rests with God, and he will settle it.

Do not put off thoughts of God till you are ill. When that time comes, frailties of body and mind often make it impossible to turn our thoughts to such things, and what we had intended to do then will perhaps end in not being done at all.

Prepare—whilst it is yet day.

SECOND DAY: II

We have a natural and a supernatural life, and both require nourishment. We are very careful and attentive to the body, but do we give as much thought to the soul? I want you to do more in the way of prayer. "Be good and say your prayers." This will bring your soul into union with God. Live a prayerful life. Take care to nourish your soul. Prayer is its life, its atmosphere, and if you pray much, all will be well with it. Some people excuse their lack of prayer by the pressure of their daily life, its occupations and duties. They say it is impossible to go to church early because their husbands want their company at breakfast; after that servants need looking after; then comes lunch followed by social duties, so that the day is done and no time is found for prayer. If you cannot attend early Mass because of your husband's breakfast, you can, at

any rate, take trouble that the meal is well and comfortably arranged, as he likes it. You can keep God in your mind, snatching a moment here and there for prayer, even if you cannot do more.

Our Lord prayed much. All the great occasions of his life were begun with prayer. The saints prayed constantly. More time used to be devoted to prayer than is the case now. The rush of life and the interruptions were less than now. Still, we should gain what time we can for prayer. If we have no inclination for prayer, we must try to create a desire for it, just as we try to create an appetite when we are "off" our food.

Prayer should be the life and atmosphere of the soul. Have a definite form of prayer. Have a favourite prayer. Perhaps the Litany of our Lord, or the *Miserere*, for the sins of others, for the sick, the dying, or for those in Purgatory; and then the *Magnificat*. These would hardly take five minutes. Try to say a prayer before lunch. You find time to wash your hands. Why no time, also, for this?

Speak to God often in your heart, if it is only to say, "I love thee," or, "Have pity on me." Be humble in your meditations before God. Ask him to create in you a spirit of prayer. The right attitude for prayer is not so easily attained, even by the saints. Creep closer to Christ. Let your love for him lead you to be kinder in your judgements of other people. Say nothing uncharitable. Be simple with God and be humble towards him. Give up some little thing for God. Acquire this habit, and you will learn to become independent of externals and of the things of this world, and the soul will grow strong.

Exercise your spiritual life as you would your body. Drop in a word for God when you can. Make excuses for others. If you hear an uncharitable conversation and unkind things are being said, do not take part in it; try to turn the subject.

SECOND DAY: III

I want you to realise that you never offend God without also doing an injury to yourself, nor a good action without personal benefit. Sin is, nowadays, looked upon very leniently. It is regarded more as a relic of barbarism than as anything which very much matters. It is thought dull not to do what you like. People seem to think that God wants nothing beyond that you should enjoy yourself and have a good time, and that you may do pretty well what you like so long as you do no injury to the State or to the community.

In fact, it seems as if no such thing as sin is recognized. The Press, the plays, the courts of law, all agree in making nothing of sin, and if you were to suggest that any given line of action might be displeasing to God, people would look at you in astonishment.

It is easy to become demoralized. That is why I consider first impressions to be the most trustworthy. The eye very soon becomes accustomed to any sight. Even horrid furniture and surroundings soon satisfy those who are used to them.

So it is with sin. It ceases to shock, and we get careless. Women, especially, are apt to be careless in their manner of speech. They speak according to their feelings and not as to fact. Take, for instance, the

characters which they give of servants, or their description of anyone whom they respectively like or dislike. Judgement is often warped by feelings. So be careful, and speak strictly the truth. Carelessness in this way, and untruthfulness, spoil the character; so do drink and drug-taking, till, at last, the character becomes demoralized, and, like the rotten branch of the vine, it is fit for nothing but to be thrown into the fire.

The character is everything. Try to build up one for yourself by realizing that you belong to God, that you depend upon him for everything, and by constant prayer to him put your character right with him.

One beautiful reason why God hates sin is that it spoils us.

There is no time like the present for forming and improving our characters. "Behold now the acceptable time; behold now the day of salvation."

SECOND DAY : IV

I am going to speak to you about Death. That is our home-going. The greatest act of our life is giving it up! So make friends with death and prepare in time. Death is really the moment when we begin to live. Man is a living soul. God took a lump of clay and breathed into it his own breath, the Breath of Life. At death the soul goes back to him; it realizes how entirely it belongs to him, so that, free from all earthly ties, it has gone straight to God, gone to give an account of what it did in the clay. God has given us talents—to some more than to others. It may be that to us he has given only one; but remember the

parable. Don't think that because you have only one, therefore you need not use it. Do something with it. Multiply it! Pull in the shafts. Work well wherever God has placed you. You are all right wherever God asks you to do his will.

Learn to think of death as your everlasting holiday. Look forward to it. Get your work for God done here on earth, and then get home and rest. Prepare for death. That moment will be a terrible one for those who neglect this thought.

It is the only thing worth doing, to get ready to be with God. It is the homecoming of the Christian exile, and we want to have a splendid "send off." There is nothing to be afraid of. God remembers that we are but dust, and death is God's rewarding-time. If you have tried to do your best here, God is kind and he will take you at your best. You must trust him about death and have no fear.

But you must prepare for it and not wait till the moment has come. You may not be able to do it then. Sudden death may come at any moment. When we go to bed we cannot tell if we shall rise again, and when we get up we do not know if we shall go to rest again. Every night, if we make a good going to rest, is like a little death. Prayer, holy water, kissing the crucifix, and then committing ourselves to God (*In manus tuas, Domine, commendō spiritum meum. Alleluia*), to our Lord, to his saints, and to our guardian angel, who has been watching over us all through our life, and then—sleep. It is a little death. When death comes, its patron, S Joseph, will watch over us and our Lady will be with us. Let us be wise and have a happy death by arranging for it in time.

This is far more important than a smart funeral. The body doesn't matter; it is the soul that matters, the soul which will go straight back to God if we have prepared as we ought. We may be sure of our Lady's support then. Would not any earthly mother come from the ends of the earth to the death-bed of her child? So we, who are children of Mary, can be certain that she will be with us to help us and to see us safely through to the other side.

So let us be wise in time and prepare for a happy death.

THIRD DAY: I

We cannot, I think, do better to-day than to consider Magdalen at the feet of Jesus Christ.

Our life is—as his was on earth—a human one. We cannot, therefore, be like the angels, but we can strive to become human saints, and to be lifted up. Above all things, we must try to avoid sin. By sin we injure and degrade our souls. By our lives we should so prepare ourselves that the last act, death, may be the triumphal arch of our home-going.

The Magdalen story you know well, that beautiful girl, so much sought after for her looks, married to a man who forsook her, and then seeking to drown her sorrows by accepting the attentions of her many admirers—all ready to take advantage of her unfortunate position—and ending in a life of degradation and sin. She fell. She was spoilt by sin. Her beauty was not used for God. Then she hears about our Lord, and one day she goes to him as he sits at supper. Those present were surprised to see her glide in, and were shocked that our Lord did not rebuke her. Simon

even remonstrates, thinking that our Lord cannot be aware of her evil life. She is overwhelmed by his forbearance with her. She weeps, she kisses his feet, her golden hair falls about her. She tells the sad story of her life; she tells her sorrow, her shame, her wish to do better. Then from the folds of her dress she brings out her precious ointment and she anoints his feet, weeping over them and wiping them with her beautiful hair. Then she slips away and disappears. Her sins are forgiven and forgotten, and from that time forward she is always to be found at his feet, always present with him. Our Lord knew more about her than did anyone else. He understood; he took her part when Simon blamed him for allowing her to touch him. She loved much, and that was enough. She was forgiven. No details were gone into, no conditions were made. Her name was not even mentioned. It was simply her words and her love—"I am sorry"—and his answer—"I forgive"—and then the subject was never to be referred to again.

To the end of time Mary Magdalen's name will have the honour of being coupled with our Lord's. This is a great consolation to us, and it is a help to you and to me. We must have the penitent spirit; we must have the wish to love, to serve, to do God's will and to carry out our mission, and without too much introspection.

Sorrow is what is wanted. We can never have too much. Let us say: "Wash me thoroughly from my sins, and blot out all my misdeeds." Do not be anxious, but be sorry. Give your whole sympathy, your love, your service; have the penitent spirit. Be at the feet of Jesus. The poor are as Christ's feet. Work

for them. Go to Christ with sorrow, love, and gratitude. Work for him, and you will be strengthened and comforted.

THIRD DAY: II

I sometimes wonder what it would have been like if I had lived before our Lord came upon earth. I think life would have been unbearable. God must have seemed so far off, like a star manifested in the distant sky. The world knew but little about God, and nothing of his love and his Fatherhood. It knew little, even, of ourselves or of our souls, and it believed that women had none. It was, in fact, almost an animal kingdom, and must have been very strange.

But the coming of Jesus Christ has altered everything. The highest ideal by which sanctity is to be judged is by the character of Jesus Christ, and it is the character which we shall take with us to heaven that matters. Heaven is the home of noble characters. Jesus Christ's character was formed of perfect mind, heart, and will. Character is formed from these three, and the results are Love and Action.

Christ had a beautiful mind, heart, and will—the three forces which go to make a beautiful character.

We often see a good heart combined with a weak will, or a strong will with an unkind heart; but our Lord had the perfect combination for a perfect character. And then, he was so simple. His great, grand thoughts were expressed in such simple words, and these prove the beautiful mind of Christ. All great minds speak simply. A specialist on any scientific subject will explain hard things in such a simple way

that it will seem quite easy, and anyone can understand. All great things are simple. Art is simple, and music, and oratory. An orator or a preacher will take his ideas, put them in order, and set them up. To Phidias, the sculptor, the lines of beauty were all quite simple. He took them, every one, from the human male, nude. That included everything, and was all simple. (He never drew from woman.)

What could be more simple than our Lord's teaching? Look at the Sermon on the Mount, and the parables. Look at the Last Supper. What simplicity and beauty! Read the parable of the Prodigal Son. Like Mary Magdalen, the erring son returns to his father and begs for forgiveness, asking to be treated as a hired servant. The father pays no attention; he orders the best to be prepared, robes to be put on, a ring on the finger, the fatted calf to be killed. There is to be no more mention of his sins now that he has repented. Christ brought home to us in this parable what our relations with God are. If you have sinned and gone astray, *come back*, express your sorrow, and he will fold you in his arms and cover you with kisses, so that you will hardly be able to realize how much you have offended him by your sins.

This is what you have to do to save your soul. Think how important your soul is. What can we give in exchange for our soul, and what profit is there if we gain the whole world and lose our soul? Christ told us the new truth that God is kinder than we knew, kinder than any mother can be to her only child, and if only you have the desire to please him he will accept that desire. He has said that if we only lust to commit sin, we have committed it already; so

the reverse is, we know, equally true. If you truly wish to do good, even if you have not the power or the opportunity, your desire will gain its reward from God equally as though you had performed it. The desire is seen, and is accepted because you possess the virtue of wishing to perform a good action. Christ's simplicity of teaching was such that the youngest child could understand it. He came at a time when life was little valued. Slaves were kept in numbers and were often cruelly treated. Murder and slaughter of enemies on a large scale was the order of the day. He came, and not even children were afraid of him. If we knew that some powerful person who could strike us dead or do what else he liked with us was about, we should try to keep out of his way; but Christ, though his power was such that he could command the storms of the sea, was kind and gentle to everyone—to the old and young, the rich and the poor, to the sad and the happy, to men, women, and children. The highest thoughts were so expressed that a child could understand. He was always benevolent to all those who swarmed about him, as bees swarm around sweet flowers.

Look at our Lord's love and try to copy it. Too often our love is uncontrolled; we do not love where we ought, or we love for some unworthy reason or an unworthy object. There should be method in our love. If we love him rightly our love will be pure. His influence is the same now as it was when he was on earth. He lived for us, and we should live for him. Study his sacred Heart, his Mind, and his Will, and copy them. Try to improve yourselves. Don't waste time in useless things like novel reading, or on the daily papers and trashy magazines. I ask any one of

you: "What have you gained during the last ten years by such literature?" It means a useless waste of time. Life is short, and serious, and precious. See how you use it and how you are improving yourselves and growing in the love of God and building up your characters. This is what Joan of Arc did. She lived as much for God when she was enclosed by our countrymen in an iron cage, like a wild beast, with chains on her neck, arms, and ankles, as when she was leading victorious armies; and when she was meeting death in the flames she asked for a cross, which a soldier made up out of two sticks. She pressed it to herself as she died. A cross—and then a crown!

THIRD DAY: III

Some two thousand years ago some simple shepherd lads were keeping their flocks where David had kept his years before. It was night, and suddenly the heavens opened and a procession of angels appeared, singing such a chorus as never was heard before on this little planet of ours.

The young men were naturally afraid, but an angel told them to fear nothing, but to go to Bethlehem, where they would find the young Child in a manger between an ox and an ass, and to worship him. They did as they were bid, and by the aid of a mysterious light they recognized the stable, and found the Infant being worshipped by his Mother and by S Joseph, whom they supposed to be his father. What wonderful simplicity that the Son of God should, out of all the world, have chosen that little village, to be born in a stable and in such poverty!

Poverty is very hard to bear. A poor man comes to me and says: "I could bear it, Father, for myself, but when the kiddies cry to me for bread it is too much. I can bear it for myself, but there is my wife and the children, and I can't stand it. It is too much." Our Lord's poverty is an example for our comfort. He, who might have possessed anything he chose, elected to come in this poor and simple way. Isn't it grand? There is nothing so grand as simplicity. He might have lived in a gilded chamber in a palace, but that would have spoilt the beautiful simplicity of his coming. He lived all his life amongst the poor, and he cared nothing for the good things of this world. We think too much of those things. We imagine that beautiful works of art and sweet houses and possessions add to our happiness. If you have these good things, do not let them interfere with the simplicity of your life. What does it matter if you possess the whole world if your soul is not safe? If such things hold you back from God, toss them from you; care nothing for them. Copy our Lord's simplicity. His birthplace was a manger, between an ox and an ass, creatures which had never offended. And then, when our Lord comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament, what wonderfully simple means he employs! How simple, and how grand! Just bread, a little flour, and a little water; and yet—there he is!

Nothing matters but God, and, if you would reach Olivet, see that you first go to Bethlehem.

THIRD DAY: IV

I feel that nothing really matters very much except that we should build up our characters meet for heaven. That is the one real thing of importance. The home at Nazareth shows us this; our blessed Lord was for thirty years teaching us this. He spent those years in a humble little obscure village, in a poor little house, made of mud, white, flat-roofed, not worth more than, perhaps, two shillings a week; and yet that was God's house, God's home for thirty years. He chose it, out of all the world, to be the place where he would live and work. Never idle, he lived a plain life—short meals, everything simple, his time alternating between prayer and work, work and prayer. Always doing, like the goldbeater, who rests himself when his right hand is tired by using his left hand instead, going on beating all the time and getting out his gold.

That is the way to do. Bear in mind the motive, be careful in your method, remember for whom you do it, and then will come the reward. Be like our Lord, contented with your surroundings and condition, contented with your work, with your tools, with your place, your food. Don't think your place, whatever it may be, beneath you. Of what place do you think you can be really worthy?

Think of the Son working at the carpenter's bench, with the shavings of the sweet-scented cedar-wood around him, and his Mother watching him.

Who you are matters little. What you are is the important thing. He looks at the heart. Failure doesn't matter if we have done it for him and have tried our

best. As the sculptor from his block of marble determines to produce the very best figure he can, and is not satisfied till he succeeds, so let us strive to become like our Model, and to build up our characters fit to go through the triumphal arch which leads to heaven.

FOURTH DAY: I

We considered yesterday our Lord's private life at Nazareth, and we must now watch him in his public and missionary life.

He had that long preparation of thirty years before his active work began. S Ignatius took our Lord's life as a type of the preparation required for the life of a Jesuit, and says that a long time is necessary to build up for the work of the profession.

A Jesuit, therefore, begins with two years' learning, then three years of philosophy, five to seven years at college, four years' theology, and one year noviceship. Then, after fifteen to seventeen years' study, the time comes for the send-off to begin work. The great thing, then, is to be simple, obedient, chivalrous, ready to go off wherever he is sent. By the time that this long course of training is over, the first freshness of youth has worn off, and before long the prime of life is past and old age begins to creep on. Then, just as the power of doing good seems to be attained, the opportunity is over.

With us all long training is required before we can get into the right way. We have to go through the experience of making mistakes till we learn how to avoid them, and by the time we have learnt to do this it is about time to die.

God uses us as he wills. He does not see as man sees.

A mother has, perhaps, sacrificed everything for the sake of her son. By great efforts she has succeeded in getting him into the Army, and she is full of hope that his career will be a brilliant one; he shows every promise of it. Then suddenly it all comes to an end by a stray shot, fired not even in an engagement. Or one sees a daughter for whom her parents have spared no pains, and of whom they had great hopes, suddenly struck down by a malignant illness which means death.

On the other hand, people who are wanted by no one, whose lives seem quite useless, live on whilst the precious ones are taken. All this is the mystery of God's will, and we cannot attempt to explain it. When I think of the uncertainties of this world it reminds me of people standing on a spring-board, awaiting their turn to leap into the Everlasting Arms. What we have to do is to prepare for our work and then to go out and do it.

Life is hard for most of us, but I do not think that it is so hard for anyone as for the smart set in society. A simple woman's life may be monotonous, but not so monotonous as the weary, dull round of society life with its annual routine of visits here and there, meeting the same people, with the same dreary, silly talk.

Much better to be a nursery governess with work to do, with a pure mind, with fervour, and with content.

Wherever you are placed, be sweet, be kind, and if you have troubles offer them up to God. Life will have

its disappointments. Married people sometimes start with the idea that life is going to be all bliss. Their ideal is not realized, but nothing much matters provided that they live their life well.

To another, life begins as though it were going to be all happiness and brightness, but it doesn't last. God breaks it up. Why? For us to prepare.

Our Lord's life was full of disappointments, and at last he was hunted down, given a mock trial without any justice, and condemned, without one friend to stand by him or to say a good word for him. Even his Mother could do nothing to help him. He could not even rest his head on her heart, and she was not able to give him so much as a cup of cold water when the cry was wrung from him: "I thirst!"

Make our Lord your pattern. Go out into the world and do what you can, without regard to failures. Apparent failures are often the greatest successes. Our Lord's life looked like a failure when he died upon the cross. Be independent of people; lean only on God, like Joan of Arc, whose greatest success was when she was tied to the stake and burnt in the flames. We, like her, shall have Jesus with us as our Life, our Light, and our Love.

FOURTH DAY: II

As this is a Saturday in May, it is suitable that we should give our devotion and our consideration to our Lady. We cannot possibly make too much of her, *provided* that of her Son we make much more. Some Catholics are wanting in devotion to her. Converts especially find enthusiasm difficult at first. They hear

so much about her claims that they are sometimes inclined to close the door, and to tell her to come round another way!

But, after a time, when they come to know and to understand her better, they are ready to throw the doors open and to ask her to come in and to remain. Like a child who wrote to me lately and said: "Dear Father, I hope you will come sooner and never go away!" Why should people be cold in their devotion to our Lady? When I see this coldness it makes me suspicious as to the amount of devotion which is given to our Lord, her Son. She is, in a measure, a gauge of our love for our Lord. All our love to her is for his sake. So let us be in the front line of loyalty; let us signalize ourselves as her devotees, as her ladies-in-waiting, linked to her by the golden chains of love. From her it was that I received my Saviour; through him I obtain my love for God, for I am sure that but for Jesus Christ my love for God would not have been what it is. Christ is man as well as God. He is Mary's Son, and that is how he becomes my friend; and I love him so completely that, because she is his Mother, I would gladly be torn in pieces if necessary for her sake. My most lovely, lovable, dearest Mother, who gave Christ to me. This is the reason for my love. The New Testament implies that she is the Mother of God. You cannot do her too much honour; nothing you can do will be half enough! S Ignatius said that he would run anyone through who failed to honour her. I like that warm Spanish blood!

It is all contained in those words, "Mother of God." She has other attributes for which our devotion to her

is due. She is most pure, most chaste, inviolate, undefiled, amiable, admirable, of good counsel, and so forth; but I do not require these. All the beautiful names you could give her would not be enough; and why? Because she is beautiful, as the moon which reflects the glory of the sun. Our Lord, her Son!

God could not raise her higher. Her praise is infinite, and exhausts the infinite. Her beauty, sweetness, and sanctity are beyond all words or thought. And she is our Mother. Christ gave her to us, and us to her, in her hour of desolation, when he said, "Woman, behold thy son." We are the children of her sorrow, so we can depend upon her sympathy. She stood under the cross in her sorrow (*Stabat Mater dolorosa*).

She is our Mother, and she wants us. She wants us to be good, and to be ever ready to stand beside her. We are not told that she did anything very remarkable. We have only seven words of hers. We see her a few times only, and yet she has set the Christian world mad about her. She is our ideal of purity, of humility, and of love. Let us love and imitate her, and grow beautiful, as she is.

FOURTH DAY : III

Our Lord's public life is so important that we will consider it again. For three years he went about "doing good." This sums up the aim of his public life—"doing good." Persons with character do as he did—they spend their time doing good. In order to do good, you must be good. Remember that "Without me you can do nothing." "Every good tree

bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit." "I am the vine," says our Lord. Try to belong to the good tree and to bring forth the good fruit. To this end you must take trouble; nothing good can be obtained without trouble.

A beautiful picture may be very quickly painted by a skilled artist, but remember the many years spent in getting ready for proficiency. Artists often suffer greatly from the strain of their profession, and their nerves and health often break down under it. Preaching is the same. People think it very easy. They little realize the breakdown work it may be, and often is. Sculptors, like painters, spend years in preparing for their eventual success. To do good in any line must take it out of you. Even the claims of society in the smart set are very exhausting. The work of a cook or of a housemaid, if properly done, means trouble and pains, patience and thoroughness.

In the spiritual life it is the same. Visiting the sick, if done regularly, as it should be, often brings fatigue and weariness. The motive is the important thing. The motive should be to please God, and therefore the work should be well done. S Ignatius once found a lay-brother doing a job badly. He inquired for whom it was being done, and when the lay-brother replied, "For God," "Then," said S Ignatius, "you must do it over again *well*. If it had been done for yourself it could have passed, but what is done for God must be *well done*."

Do all these things well. Purify your motives in the morning, and carry them out all through the day. If the motive is right the rest will come, too. If I am going on a journey and I start right, I know that I

shall arrive all right without inquiring from the guard at every stop.

In the same way, if you, as a Catholic, have your ticket, you know that you are on the right lines. Purity of intention is required of you, and then you will have our Lord as your head, with all the saints and guardian angels to help you on. Have method in your life. So much time is wasted which would be saved if fixed times were given to our work. Be clear about what you have to do. It is bad for the character to be casual. People too often begin the day without any clear idea as to how they are going to spend it. Let your work and your hours be definite. Divide your time between your temporal and your spiritual duties. Unless you do this, time and character are both wasted. If you are tired, give yourself a day off, take a holiday when you need it; there is no harm in that. Our Lord and the saints made time for all important things. Realise the value of method and of time. The great points to strive for are purity of intention, and method.

If you work on these lines, don't be disappointed if you meet with failure after all. Don't let want of success disturb you. Go on doing what you believe to be right; we cannot judge where success comes. Two priests may be preaching, the one to a crowded church, the other in a side aisle, yet the priest with the large congregation may not touch the heart or bring about the salvation of souls, whilst the apparently neglected preacher may succeed in these things.

To our eyes one appears as a giant, and the other as a pygmy, but our judgement is incorrect.

Remember that it is the intention that tells; if this

is right, do not be discouraged. A drag on the wheel disheartens.

Don't be sad about your work. Lift up your hearts.
Sursum corda.

If you are struggling to live for God, you do well, and you will be like a tree, growing on in life and hope, and your kind Father will help and comfort you.

FOURTH DAY: IV

What a vast difference there is between God and the spirit of evil which runs through the worldly side of life. The world is a strange mimicry of the Catholic Church, but it is a world which is in darkness. Worldliness is to be found everywhere, where human nature is, and it is regulated by its own unwritten laws and instincts. The worldly person (to be avoided!) is one who always goes along the line of least resistance. All that person thinks necessary is to be comfortable. He leads an armchair life; he needs riches and wealth (obtained honestly if possible!). In that world it is a great sin to be poor. If you are poor, you are not wanted. So, it is necessary to keep up appearances, so as to impose upon the world. Only lately I met a man from the Stock Exchange, looking extremely smart, with a new silk hat, and so on. I said to him: "I fear your business is not doing well." "Why?" he asked. "Because you are looking so prosperous," I said. The world wants to be in the swim and to have nothing but pleasure. For this, money must be had, and life is given up to these objects.

This kind of thing is spiritual ruin. This is not the sort of life for which God has placed us here. He

wants his children in heaven some day. Christ says: "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you." We know what are the works of charity which God wants from us. He has said, "I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me," and, "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

That is the sort of life you have to live for—not for money-making. How much of the money which the millionaires make do they bank in heaven?

Men and women of the world are often very attractive. They are in the know, and good company, and charming to meet, but if they have no backbone, when they come to die they will die easily, no doubt, and then just glide down. Where? It is not difficult to get into that easygoing kind of life; but that life includes the seven deadly sins—Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth. Christ said that we must sit loose by the things of this world, not cling to them; use our money well, remembering that it is lent to us to do good with, and to help those who are poorer than we are.

Train your heart and your affections. Do not allow them to be set upon worldly things, such as dress, jewels, and so forth. Do not let yourself be wedded to the things of this life. Practise self-denial. The spirit of God says to you: "Take up your cross daily and follow me." The world is full of disappointments, but God will be our wealth and our strength.

Mortify yourself, so that through a little self-denial you may have something over with which you can do good.

Work amongst your poorer neighbours may seem

useless, but perhaps you are loved where you have no idea of it!

I have said before, be careful how you judge of things by your feelings. In describing a sermon, a picture, a painting, or music, do not describe your feelings, but state things as they really are. It is so important that judgements should be formed on the merits of the case, and not according to our sentiments.

Keep your feelings in the right place, and, above all, take a cheerful, bright view of everything you can.

Remember the *Sursum Corda!*

FIFTH DAY: I

I want you now to think of the Last Supper of our Lord. All the disciples were there, even Judas. You know the beautiful picture by Leonardo da Vinci, in which each disciple seems to be asking, "Is it I?" Our Lord called them all his friends, not his servants. A friend is such a rare and precious thing. It means one to whom you can reveal everything, keeping nothing back, and whom you can trust. Such friendship may come but once in a lifetime; only once perhaps will you come across that *alter ego*, that "other self," and if you do find such a friend, it is not unlikely that he or she will be taken away. Friendship is different from relationship, and is rare. Well! Our Lord is ready to be just such a friend to us. He gives himself for his friends. He knelt down and washed the feet of his disciples. After that, no office can be too low or too menial for us. Nothing is beneath our dignity.

Pictures like Leonardo's are useful, even if, as

works of art, they are poor, because they help us to realize scenes in the life of our Lord and of the saints.

It is beautiful to have such things about us, and we cannot afford to lose the help which they bring to our spiritual life.

Think of the scene when our Lord washed the disciples' feet, and ask our Lord to wash you yet more. "Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities." "Create a clean heart in me." Keep helpful pictures in your prayer-books to remind you. In this artificial world we cannot afford to neglect such aids to faith.

Our Lord is about to leave his flock, and he wishes to give them his best gifts, so he gives his own Body to help us to live. S Paul says: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." Our Lord wishes to be in union with us. Love is union. So he takes bread and wine and feeds them all with his own Body, and this is the first Communion.

The disciples were all present, from S John to Judas, and he says: "One of you shall betray me," but mentions no name. He does not reveal his betrayer. Such is his love for us, that he feels he can never give us enough, so he gives us his very self. Where true love is the same desire to give is felt, but we have nothing to give which we did not obtain from him.

He gives himself for us all, and he is there daily on the altar waiting to feed us with himself. He longs to give himself to us, and he tells us that there is no life in us without him. "I am come that they may have life." "Come unto me." "My flesh is meat indeed."

Say to him: "I need thee, and I come to feed on

thee, and if I do not I shall soon sicken and droop and die." Come as often as you can, and gain strength each day to make a better Communion on the day after. Keep on, as a blind man holds on from one rail to the next till he reaches his goal. Be thankful to heaven for all he is to us. Sing the *Sanctus*. Ask the holy angels to unite with you in the *Anima Christi*, so that you may gain strength and fill your soul with grace, to defend you from sin, and that you may be called at last to be in heaven with him.

Go to the sacred wounds in Communion, and offer the precious Blood for all, for those who are sick, or in sorrow, or trouble, or in sin, in Purgatory, and especially for those who are living in sin in this country, in the empire, and in the world.

FIFTH DAY: II

I want to say that silence is required during this Retreat. If you can't keep it, go away. On Wednesday you can talk as much as you like, but till then be silent!

In considering the Passion of our Lord, we realize that the higher the light the deeper the shadow. That there is no joy without sorrow (*Sine dolore non vivitur in amore*), *i.e.*—there is no love without sorrow. Love brings sorrow with it. But deep shadows bring high glory! The climax of Joan of Arc's life was the crowning of her Dauphin at Rheims. Then followed the long time of darkness leading to her martyrdom. A blaze of glory, exchanged for a blaze of flame! When troubles come, remember that it is because our Lord loves you more. In his Passion he had his be-

loved ones with him. In the Garden of Gethsemani were Peter, James and John. We are asked: "Can you drink of the chalice?" It is certain that our Lord would rather send us sorrow than that we should have none. Sorrow is needed to soften our hearts, as fire softens wax. If your hearts are of wax they will soften, if of clay, sorrow will harden them, for fire softens wax but hardens clay. Our best friends are those who have been through sorrow. They are disciplined to Christ, and are able to say: "Not my will but thine be done."

You can be useful to others in the measure in which you have suffered. You have to be tested. Everything before it is ready for use has to be tested. Guns are tested to see if they are strong enough to stand the strain of the percussion.

Materials of all kinds have to be tested to prove that they are strong and durable. Joan of Arc was terribly tested by her tormentors. She was shown horrible instruments of torture, and was told that she should be subjected to them, and be thrown into the flames, unless she admitted that she had done wrong. It makes one weep to read the story of the treatment to which this child of nineteen was subjected. She yields for a moment at the sight of these horrors, but quickly recovers herself again.

You must stand the test. You must work, and, if needs be, suffer. How can God give you a crown of glory if you simply sit with your arms folded in an armchair by the fire and if you do nothing?

No, you must bestir yourself. Be God's heroine on earth.

Are you afraid to go through the Valley of the

Shadow? Are you ready? If you don't prepare you may be taken unaware.

Remember, the greater the love the greater the sorrow. Where the sun shines brightest there are the darkest shadows. Bear your sorrows for the love of God. Take your troubles as the raw material from which your armour is to be made, and in which you are to fight your battle, and win your crown.

FIFTH DAY: III

We will now consider the Passion of our Lord. Supper over, he goes out and crosses the brilliant city to the south gate, where a slope leads to the wooden bridge over the Brook Cedron. He follows the bridle-path on the east to a little square garden called Gethsemani, which means, "Garden of Olive-pressers." Jerusalem, in the near distance, stands white and beautiful from out of a belt of woods. Opposite is the Gate Beautiful, and Olivet is in front. As he passed the bridge over Cedron he said to the eight: "Sit you here till I go yonder and pray." They are too sad at his words, and at the prospect of parting, to be able to pray. He takes on the three with him. Think of that wonderful white-faced and white-robed figure when he says: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."

Never had he expressed his feelings so openly and utterly as now, and the three who once shared in the glory of the transfiguration are now to share in his humiliation.

This is no time to go into the details of the Passion, but try to realize that at the moment of which we are speaking he made a great act of contrition for the sins

of the whole world, and that his Sacred Heart was nearly broken under the load. Clouds of sin rolled up upon him, until he was overwhelmed with their weight. Sin seems to have got the better of him, and the blood of agony dropped from him to the ground, staining the tender grass upon which the paschal moon was shedding its silvered light through the trees.

What a sight! "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" "Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

No wonder that the cry breaks from him: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me!" Yet, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

So he prays, whilst he thinks of mankind, of you, and of me, bearing for us the weight of all our sins, hidden and forgotten, present, past, and to come. Sins of weakness, of malice, of pride, vanity, selfishness, innumerable.

He asks the Father to forgive them all, and bears the agony of their guilt. At last an angel comes to comfort him, and to give him strength. He drinks the chalice, and is ready to go forth and meet the enemy. Then they seize him and drag him to the courts. He is tied to a pillar and scourged before the people. A crown of thorns is pressed upon his brow, and at last he is stretched forth to be nailed to a cross, to be lifted up, and to die, in atonement for our sins. "Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Ask him! How did your guardian angels comfort him in the garden? Were they able to say, "Rabboni, Master, your daughters, in their Retreat, are uniting their sorrow and their contrition with thine." Could

your guardian angel have promised this in your name? Are you doing this now, whilst you have the opportunity?

When you feel hard, and dry, and unable to make a good act of contrition, and when you feel yourself without sweetness, and you fancy that your love has evaporated, just slip down on the ground before your crucifix and unite your sorrow with our Lord's. Say that you are grieved for all you have done wrong, but that your trust is in him. Say, "I am not worthy" (*Non sum dignus*), and that you feel that you deserve punishment. Say, "My precious Friend, would that I had always been true to thee. How ashamed and humble and broken-hearted I feel, that I should be like Judas, and like Peter when he denied thee, like Caiphas, and Herod, and Pilate! O my Saviour, I grieve with thee for all my sins! Thy contrition has, I know, removed their guilt, and though I be red as scarlet, thou will make me white as snow. I unite my contrition with thine, both in life and in death."

If you are in sorrow, and you feel sad and depressed, take your crucifix and the prayer of Christ will strengthen you. Strength is what we need and shall get through the agony in the garden.

Oh, the wonder and mystery of such love! To think that my sin, of which I think so little, which never troubles me much, and of which I am so little ashamed, should yet have done this!

Our Lord was contrite for us, and has won our pardon.

Truly, "greater love than this hath no man!"

FIFTH DAY: IV

We have now come to that point in our Lord's life when Judas appears upon the scene, leading a band of ruffians to Gethsemani, intending to capture their prey. To make sure that they should not miss him, Judas had taken the precaution to say: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he."

Our Lord sees the band, and meets them with the words: "Whom seek ye?" Presently they seize him, bind him, and rush him down towards Sion, where Annas, the High Priest, was waiting. A double-faced villain is Annas, with a keen eye for profitable business, and for feathering his own nest, whilst posing as a high cleric of his church. Annas asked our Lord first about his disciples. Our Lord might well have answered that he could say but little good of them. One had just betrayed him, another was soon going to deny him, and all had fled at the approach of danger. But, instead of this, he answered not a word. This is a great lesson. If you are asked about a person, and if you cannot speak good, say nothing. He knew that his disciples would do better later on, and that though they seemed faithless now, they would later be true to him even to martyrdom. So, he thinks nothing of their weakness now.

If something unkind is said of or to you, and if it hurts you, do not think evil, nor be angry; do not say anything hasty in return. Do not take up your pen and write an angry letter, or, if you write it, do not, at any rate, post it till next day; better still, not at all. If you have borne it well, the incident will have done you no harm. If you hear me ill spoken of, you are

not my friend if you agree in what is said; you cease to be my friend; you become only an acquaintance. Not that I care what evil is said, so long as it is not true. The truth shall make us free, and what isn't true doesn't matter at all!

Annas asked next about our Lord's teaching. "Ask them who have heard me," he replies. As much as to say, "I have not had one doctrine for public and another for private use," as Annas himself had in his life. So angry was Annas' servant that he struck our Lord, probably with his shoe. But what must have hurt our Lord more than the blow was the mean, miserable miscarriage of justice in the whole trial. Witnesses were called who contradicted each other, yet they were listened to and accepted. Then he is asked whether he is the Son of God. He answers: "I am, and hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven." Then they accused him of blasphemy, and declared him to be worthy of death. They gave him no proper trial. They did not examine his claims, nor allow counsel for his defence.

Nothing of the sort! On the spot he is condemned. The soldiers begin to strike and ill-treat him, and at the end of this most unjust and cruel trial, he is left all night to the mercy of the rough soldiers and ruffians who surround him.

In our country we make a great deal of fair play, but that was what our Lord did not get.

Are we true enough to our tokens of love? Are we staunch and true to our religion, and proud, as we should be, of being Catholics? I am sometimes shocked at Catholic bedrooms. A beautiful landscape over the bed! No statue of our Lady. Holy water

dried up (in the heat of last summer, perhaps!). High Church bedrooms have these things, and it would almost seem that they had been taken from Catholics, who are, in consequence, without them! I went on board a Dreadnought, where the Captain was a Catholic. Over his bed was our Lady and S Joseph, and so on. I said: "I see you have these tokens around you." "Yes, indeed," he answered; "wouldn't go to sea without them for worlds. Have had them with me ever since I was in the nursery."

All these things are important as aids to faith. Do not forget the precept: "Gather up the fragments."

SIXTH DAY : I

Though it is impossible to go fully into the Passion of our Lord, I cannot pass over the Court of Pilate. There is so much to be learnt from it. The sun must just have begun to peep over Mount Olivet, when Pilate was disturbed by the shouts and yells of the crowd who were swinging up to the Palace. No doubt he looked down at them contemptuously as they brought our Lord before him and accused him of being a malefactor. Pilate said to them: "Take him you and judge him according to your law." But already they had decided on his death, so they said: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to *death*." Pilate sees no special harm in Christ's claim to be the Son of God, so the people trump up three other accusations, viz.—of stirring up the people, of calling himself a king, and of refusing to pay tribute. All three were lies. He was, above all things, a peacemaker. He had not said he was a king; others had said it of him, and he had

performed a miracle, with the special object of paying tribute! These false charges must have wounded his pure Soul, even more than the blows wounded his Body. Pilate then calls our Lord aside. What an opportunity was here, to be thus thrown back upon his conscience! Listen to your conscience. Let it speak; do not allow it to make excuses, and to mitigate things. Let it be truthful.

Pilate asked our Lord if he was a king. How straight is the answer: "For this cause came I into the world," and he declares that his own death was necessary in order to fulfil his mission.

What a model for us in carrying out our mission, and in building up our character! Pilate asks: "What hast thou done?" What a question to answer! What, indeed, has our Lord *not* done, for the world, for the Church, for you and for me! And what have we done in return?

Then Pilate asks: "What is truth?" The world doesn't care to know about truth. It cares nothing for the soul, or for religion; other things are more important! That is the way the world often looks at it. Then Pilate said: "I find no fault in him. I will, therefore, chastise him and let him go." This did not satisfy the angry mob, and they shouted: "Crucify him." So, after being sent to Herod, he is brought back to Pilate, who consents to the scourging, though believing him to be innocent. Principle is sacrificed to expediency in gross injustice. How meekly he bears it all without a word.

Truly he is the Lamb of God, meek and gentle. Picture the scene and draw strength from it to bear any trials and difficulties which come to you.

Then follows the crowning with thorns, the mock court, the "Hail, King of the Jews."

How our love for him should be inflamed, when we think of all this.

Love him, be loyal and true to him. Give him your heart, and be ready to go through anything and everything for him, day and night. Go often to Communion—daily, if possible; often to confession, so that, in spite of many faults, your heart may be inflamed with love. Remember what he is to you, and what you ought to be to him.

SIXTH DAY : II

I want to talk to you now about Faith. S John said : "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith."

Faith it is which enables us to be and to remain Catholics. To be a Catholic is to have the Faith. The spirit of believing belongs to the household of faith. Everyone in that household believes the same thing—from the garret to the scullery ! Faith is to believe on the authority of another what I cannot myself prove. We take most of our knowledge and information on faith. We hear of an Australian drought, whereby cattle and sheep die off and the profits of the settlers suffer. We believe it, though we are not there to see it. Astronomers tell us the mysteries of the solar system, and we believe them, though we cannot prove what is said. So we accept opinions from our lawyers or doctors, because they speak with authority. We can prove hardly any of these things. Our information is mostly borrowed knowledge. Even a doctor does not

prescribe for himself; he calls in another to prescribe for him.

"Suspend your judgement" is a favourite motto of mine. Do not be in a hurry till you know both sides. A speech may be very convincing till you hear the answer. You may feel sure of the justice of a case in court, till you hear the other side, and finally the judge, with his summing up, puts you right.

Suspend your judgement!

If you do this you will avoid many mistakes. Supernatural order requires faith. If you believe in God it is only reasonable to expect some revelation from him. It would be strange that he should place us here and then never say a word to us, and give us no help. It is no surprise that our Lord should have come to live, work, and die for us, that he has proved himself to be God, and has set up a Church for us, which speaks infallibly in his name. I accept the Church on divine authority, and I believe what she teaches. She gives me the right lines to go upon. She gives light for my *mind*, and strength for my *will*, and fire for my *heart*. She is a guide to tell me what I should do. I believe in her. God has revealed her to me, and through her I can see and know the truth, and the "truth shall make me free."

Not free without law. England is essentially a free country, and why? Because her laws are recognized and obeyed. What would London be without law? The immense traffic of the City goes on without a hitch because the law is obeyed, and when a policeman raises his hand the carriage of the richest millionaire stops! This is the law and order of the Catholic Church. She has the weapon of order. She teaches us

all we have to know about our Lord, about our Lady, about Purgatory, and all other points, and she guides us correctly in everything. You can never thank God enough for this. Faith is God's greatest special gift; it enables you to sweep the heavens and to know them. As you cannot see a newly discovered star without the help of a telescope, so faith guides you into the right road. It is a tonic to strengthen you, and provides you with milestones to lead you to the place where there are "many mansions."

Faith is as a beacon light to the mariner. It enables us to bear sorrow and trials and difficulties, knowing them to be but temporary, and because we know that the lamp of faith will expire at last in the blaze in which we shall see God!

Only keep your lamp burning so that you will gain strength and calm, knowing that God is at the head of his Church.

"The just man liveth by faith," and then when the time comes to put off your armour, and the battle of life is over, and the burthen laid down, you will find that it was worth everything, and that your faith and hope will carry you through the golden gates of love, to be at home for ever.

SIXTH DAY : III

Ecce Rex vester! ("Behold your King!") Our Lord is your King, and he reigns and rules from his throne—the cross! He reigns from there over all creation. He was a king always, but he did not exercise his power till his Coronation Day on the cross. There were tokens of his royalty at the time of his birth,

when the angels sang the most wonderful chorus which has ever been heard on earth, but it passed away again. The Magi came to offer their gifts, and to pay their homage, but it didn't last, and soon he turned his back upon any claim to kingly power and went to Egypt to escape the jealousy of Herod. When he returned, it was to a poor, little home in Nazareth, living there simply and poorly with his Mother and S Joseph. In the Temple, when he discussed with the doctors, there is some reappearance of his kingship, but he quits it, and is subject again till he is thirty. Then he goes out into the world, but without any kingly power or state. He said himself: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Now and then his wondrous power asserts itself: when he stills the storms of the sea, when he raises the widow's son from the dead. After he had performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes the multitude wished to make him their king, but he escaped from them into the mountains to pray.

When, then, did his kingship begin? It began when he left the supper room in the upper chamber; in Gethsemani, where he dyed his garments in kingly purple with his own blood, and when the multitude of riff-raff and wickedness fell upon his sacred person. Then it was that he began his royal procession towards his coronation—his Crucifixion; when he stood before Pilate, who asked, "Art thou a king?" and answered that hereafter he should be seen coming in the clouds of heaven. Where were his followers? Where his subjects? His troops? His standard-bearer? He carried his own standard—his cross! He said: "I, if I be

lifted up, will draw all things to myself." When he died, then it was that he began to reign. Earthly kings cease to reign when they draw their last breath, but with our Lord it was just the opposite. His example sums up all his teaching for us. "Take up your cross daily and follow me." The reign of grace begins in our hearts. His teaching is all love. "Love me and your neighbour as yourself." "Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend." When he gives up all for us we cannot refuse to let him reign over our hearts, and to be sanctified as we stand around him, and ask to be allowed to be his followers. We are his subjects, and we know that he has done all this for us. We, on our part, will fight for Christ and for Christianity, no matter if it be through fire, so that we may be brave and pure and true.

SIXTH DAY: IV

We will take as our subject to-night the story of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. They were walking along sadly, talking of their disappointment, for they had hoped that our Lord was going to establish his kingdom and that the hated foreigner would be expelled. But the great things which they had expected had all failed, and their hopes were gone. This was now the third day since our Lord's death. Therefore they were sad as they walked towards the quiet little village of Emmaus. When we are sad, how much we want to be alone or to be left with, perhaps, just one person! Imagine the talk of these two. How they recalled his words. How sadly, how pleadingly he had spoken, and yet how little he had said. Whilst

they are talking of our Lord's life a stranger draws near and asks of what they are speaking. They reply that the subject was the recent death, of which he must surely have heard. Great things had been expected, but now this was the third day. . . . Then our Lord speaks. He tells them that they should not have been surprised, for that everything had been foretold in the Scriptures—viz., Isaiah lv. His words bring to them a new light. They delight in his presence, and ask him to come on with them and to accept their poor hospitality. He did as they asked him, and later on he broke bread with them and then disappeared. Then they realized who he was, and said one to another: "Was not our heart burning within us?"

Learn from this beautiful chapter of our Lord's life how he comes to us—simply, poor, he meets us on our journey. No matter where we are; where two or three are gathered together he is with us and full of sweetness and sympathy, as at Emmaus.

We often feel ourselves to be bad and wicked, without love of God in our hearts. We are unhappy and dispirited. Why should we be sad? We know that we have to suffer and that after that we shall enter into glory. Do you want to come to heaven without any trouble? Be brave; have courage and confidence. Think of all he went through! Tribulation is necessary for us. Blessed is he who is tempted and who withstands it bravely. To him shall be given a crown of life. His garments shall be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Read the Scriptures, and they will show you how we must be tried, even as gold in the fire is tried. It may be hard for us to bear, but not too hard, for Christ has promised to lighten the burden.

We must expect troubles, in common with our Lord, and we shall gain strength from them, if we bear them well, to wear our crown.

As we go through the pilgrimage of life, we, like the two disciples, may be overtaken as he comes one way or another. Our hearts will burn within us as he speaks to us and says: "Come." It may be in Communion that he will come to us, when he gives us that divine food in the breaking of bread. By the laws of the Church we may receive it only once a day, but ask him to open your eyes and to make your heart fresh and good so that you may carry the burdens of life well, even if they are heavy. They are, in reality, insignificant. Life has its trials alike for all, be he pope, priest, peasant, or pauper. All are as flies upon the window-pane—one a little higher than another—but all will die and be swept up in the dustpan. Life is like the men in the game of chess—made up of kings, queens, and pawns—but they are all thrown into the same box when the game is over. Faith alone makes life great and enables us to look into heaven and to see the thrones awaiting us. Our Lord might have blamed these two disciples and might have spoken of the way in which they had all forsaken him. But he did nothing of the kind. A study of our Lord's life overwhelms us. From his character and from the breaking of bread in Communion we shall gain strength for working out our pilgrimage here.

SEVENTH DAY: I

It is natural that thoughts of God should be more in our minds whilst we are in Retreat than when

we are out in the world. The atmosphere is so different. Therefore, whilst you are here strive to get purity and good intention. It is the intention that matters. If you give a dinner-party at home, God does not require you to be thinking of him the whole time and neglecting your guests. He wishes you to attend well and kindly to your duties as hostess, for his sake. Purity and intention are everything, whatever you are doing. Try to overcome yourself because our Lord would wish it. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever else ye do, do all to the glory of God" and for the good of souls. This is the kind of sanctity you want as a spiritual lift, to carry you right up to heaven. Sanctify your life, try to practise our Lord's example. Be modest, nice, and pure, have elevated thoughts. If you have the goodwill, much good can be done even without money, especially if you are possessed of education and strong health. Take your natural life wherever you are placed and make it spiritual. It is easy to be nice towards congenial people, but it is a grand spiritual life to be equally so towards the boring, the uninteresting, and the uncongenial person. Be satisfied with your surroundings. Don't grumble if you have a church and a priest who are not pleasing to you. Our Lord puts up with them. Cannot you do the same? You can't correct these things, so be patient and say: "I come for Christ's sake."

A hotel where you stay may be badly managed, and you may feel that you do not get your money's worth. Perhaps it is tantalizing to pay for what you do not get, but don't vent your feelings on the waiter. Be patient with your maid, even if she is trying. No doubt she could sometimes say the same of you. In shopping

be considerate. Don't make the assistant cover the counter with materials and then leave the shop without buying anything. The shopwalker notes the failure to sell, and the assistant may lose her place in consequence. Don't be mean in paying your cabs. Be always kind, thoughtful, generous, considerate, even to the crossing sweeper, for our Lord's sake. Pay your bills regularly from the highest motive.

There is room for more generosity in the Church. It is a fact that the collection in a poor East End church last Christmas Day exceeded that of Farm Street. The poor have a truer instinct than the rich in this matter. Make your offerings for Mass. In this way you can do double good, for, besides the value of the Mass, you help towards the support of your priests. Since our Church property was all taken away from us we have nothing of our own, and must therefore charge one shilling for a seat at High Mass or depend upon voluntary gifts in order to keep going.

Spiritual reading is good, if only because it occupies time which might otherwise be given to useless reading. If you read the life of some saint, as I have to do every day, much of what you read may be simple imagination and not fact, but all the same, you will be able to gain something good from it. In everything try to sanctify your life. Be human, like my patron, S Bernard, who so sanctified his human nature that it became filled with grace, as a sponge becomes filled with water. Then squeeze it out for the good of others, and refill it with fresh stores of grace to make you bright and cheerful and hopeful.

Be generous. Get what you pay for, by all means, but remember that there is a point—*Noblesse oblige*.

If our Lord were to give us nothing beyond what we have earned, where should we be? What if he said to us: "You are wanting in grace, therefore I can give you none"! Aim at sanctity, and if you are a perfect Christian, then you will also be a perfect lady.

SEVENTH DAY: II

S Peter said to the other disciples: "I go a-fishing." They replied: "We also come with thee." Before the Passion they had not been so united or kindly; on the contrary, they had been inclined to find fault and had contended amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest. But after such sorrow as they had lately passed through a chord had been touched which showed itself in sympathy and a closer union of hearts. Before the Passion the disciples would probably have let Peter go alone. Here is a lesson for us. It often happens in family life that the kindness is wanting which prompts us to join with others in doing things they like, for the sake of giving them pleasure. On the contrary, any expressed wish often gives a chance for opposition. It is a great thing to give up our own will, especially for those under us, to do kind acts for others, and *all* for the sake of our Lord. There will be many opportunities if we seek for them—little gifts to children, to servants; things which cost but little and which you can bring home with you from a journey, and which give pleasure, as a proof of thought and kindness.

Peter and the others fished all night, but they caught nothing. They might easily have been disheartened and have given up and gone home, but if they had

done so they would not have met our Lord. A fisherman's life teaches us the virtue of hopefulness. In spite of disappointments, his hopefulness is very striking. He always looks for success with the next throw. If you have disappointments, do not let yourself be cast down. Console yourself with the big things of Nature and the bigger things of grace. Accept what comes as the will of God. See him on the waters of tribulation. He says, "Without me you can do nothing," but with his help you will have a tremendous haul. Do your best and persevere, even if your work seems dull and useless and without good results. Never give up. A wife prayed all her life, constantly and unfailingly, for the conversion of her husband. It seemed all in vain, but at last, on his death-bed, the change came, and he died within the fold of the true Church of Christ. In the same way mothers have often prayed for their children, and the answer, long delayed, has come at last. Only pray unceasingly, and the answer will come in God's own time. Give him your love, and he will give you eternity. He came to his disciples after they had been toiling all night. Only give him time. Leave the moment to him.

It was after this that our Lord asks Peter: "Lovest thou me?" He repeats the question three times, and Peter's heart fills. "Thou knowest," he says. Then, after the third time, our Lord tells Peter that he is to be the Shepherd of his Sheep—*i.e.*, of the Fathers and Bishops of the Church—and also of the lambs—*i.e.*, of his people, of everyone. What a wonderful revelation of our Lord in this conversation! Peter might have expected to forfeit our Lord's confidence and to be regarded as untrustworthy after his denial of him; but

it is just the contrary. Peter is selected amongst them all as the one to whom, in spite of everything, our Lord's interests on earth are to be confided. Peter is to be the universal Shepherd who is, with the full confidence of our Lord, to be in charge of the sheep and of the lambs, of his Church on earth. He bids Peter to serve for him, and Peter has been doing it ever since, and is doing it now in the person of his successor in the See of S Peter as the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, the Head of Christ's Church for as long as that Church shall last.

This is a world of energy and activity. "If you love me," be an apostle in your capacity and in your place, wherever you are. To love is to serve. Let this be the fire of your life.

SEVENTH DAY: III

We have come to the last day of the Retreat. Let us pick up the threads and see what we shall take away with us. We have seen, first, that we belong to God and that we depend upon him for everything, and because we are his our life is to be one of praise and of service. The highest flight of spiritual life is love. God's name is Love, and love gives and does. It is not only a theory, but still more a practice, and it shows itself far more in deeds than in words. Remember how everything we have comes from God. If he were for one moment to cease to give, we should cease to be. "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights." We cannot praise him enough for his extraordinary goodness towards us all individually. He is greater than all

praise. You cannot say the *Gloria* and the *Deo Gratias* ("Thanks be to God") too often. We do not praise him enough. Have praise ever ready on your lips and in your heart, and use the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat*.

Besides praising God, it is good to praise other people. Never be afraid of praising. It is good for them. We do not praise often enough. We fear to make them conceited. You need not be afraid of that. Don't be afraid to give encouragement. See how our Lord dealt with the Magdalen.

Some people seem to think that fault-finding is a sign of intellect and cleverness, and they criticize everything. This is a mistake. Let us praise God and praise all those we can for God.

The next point to remember is that our Lord is present in everything. We can never get him second-hand. Realize his presence more, feel how you ought to reverence him, and live your life as in his presence, everywhere and always.

Don't neglect the aids to faith which God gives us: holy water, pictures—even if indifferent ones—weak and simple things which God uses for his work and for his glory. Get what you can out of them. Have the lowly spirit which says: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Cherish, praise, and reverence, and do not criticize. Reverence our Lord in his Church, in his poor, in his innocent children in the streets; realize the possibility of good which exists in others; be fair and just in all your dealings.

God is active and energizing in us, giving us life and power of action. He works by the same methods in the order of Nature, bringing back to us the lovely

days of spring and renewing the face of the earth. All that he does is so splendid. See a little flower under the microscope. How wonderfully it is made! Compare it with a Parisian artificial flower. God's work is grand and beautiful at any time and in any place, near or far. He gives us so much. What are we doing for him in return?

It may be that when our working days are done our work may seem to be incomplete; but this need not disturb us. God knows better than we do, and when our eyes close in death they will open again in the light of his glory.

Is life worth living? This depends entirely upon how you live.

EIGHTH DAY

I hope that the Retreat which is now over will be helpful to you and that you will gain strength from it to do your work in the world to which you are now returning.

Remember that success or failure are things about which you need have no anxiety; leave that to the children of the outside world.

God judges by the will and by the intention; man judges by the result. What to us appears to be a failure God may regard as a success.

Therefore, if our working days are over before our work is completed, it does not follow that our life has been a failure. God calls others to take up the work where we have left it, and it reaches its conclusion according to his will.

I have just received the news of the death of my brother at Hatfield.

A few more years of life seemed very important in his case, to enable him to finish the work which he had in hand. But God knows best and has called him home, and I am sure that he had a great "send-off."

Another of my brothers, the Cardinal, was looking forward to the opening of his cathedral, for which he had worked so energetically, but he opened it with his corpse.

This had all the appearance of a failure, but God employed another sickle to cut the wheat which he had sown, and someone else was appointed to carry the sheaves.

Another of my brothers was on the point of leaving England to complete his work abroad when he was found dead in his bed. His work was then suddenly stopped.

God sees when we have done enough and when our hour for rest has come, and then, if we have for a short time to dwell in God's prison-house, it will not be long before we are allowed to come into his presence.

Only let your life here be humble, pure, patient, and simple. Leave the rest to God, and believe that he knows best.

NOTES OF RETREAT, JULY 2-8, 1910

FIRST DAY

THIS is the day on which we commemorate the Visitation of Our Lady, and we begin our Retreat with the *Magnificat*, that wondrous and beautiful hymn, and we put ourselves under the care of our Lady during this Retreat. Ask her to minister to you, that you may obtain, through her, the rare, pure wine drawn straight from her Son's sacred Heart. May this Retreat help you to increase your love for Jesus Christ.

This is a special time; make the most of it. Enter into it seriously with all your heart, and come with a good will and with a right spirit, ready to put up with any little inconveniences and restrictions. Take this opportunity of being *alone with God*. Offer yourselves to him. Give him something; our prayers are too often only *wanting* something from him. We ask for blessings of all sorts. This time I want you to *give* as well as to ask. Let God receive from us. Give him your time. Be in earnest. Spend your time before the Tabernacle. Bask in his sunshine. A doctor said to me once when I was feeling tired: "Sit in the sun. Wrap yourself up well, and just sit in the sun; nothing will do you more good." So I ask you to spend much time basking in the sunshine of the Blessed Sacrament. Take your crucifix in your hand and let our Lord get hold of you. Let him talk to you, and listen to what he says. The Sun-bath is a great cure. Rest in the

Sun and you will be enriched with his blessings. An artist said to me lately: "I belong to the Church of England, but it doesn't satisfy me; I can't seem to get hold of it. How is it in your religion?" I answered him: "In my religion you have no need to get hold of anything. It will get hold of you. The Mother clings to her child." Let our Lord get hold of you, and he will see to the rest for you. Religion is as a seed sown in your heart, where it can grow into life by the aid of the sunshine and the showers which the Church pours down on you. Say to our Lord, "I want to be what you want me to be," and then meet your life with courage and with trust. Let each one do what she can. Train yourself before God. Live alone with God as much as possible, and offer all your being and all your life to him. Nothing is too small in his sight.

"Between the saddle and the ground
Grace may be found."

And for all you give, what a reward you will receive! Give him your love and your time now, and you shall receive an eternity.

SECOND DAY: I

As a train may avoid a terrible smash by a shunt at the right moment, so one thought may make all the difference to our eternity. Perhaps during this Retreat just the thoughts you needed may come to you. Not new ones, but helpful ones. A man—not a Catholic—who came to hear me preach said afterwards that he was disappointed because he heard nothing new. I have nothing new to say, but I want you to-day to dwell upon these two thoughts:

Firstly, that you belong entirely and inalienably to God.

Secondly, that you depend upon God for everything.

We hear men speak of their creations of all kinds. Books, pictures, buildings, even millinery, are described as "creations." And so they are—in a sense. Man is a creator, but he can create nothing without materials. If he obtains these he can create things, and they become his to deal with as he likes—to sell or to give away. God alone needs no materials. This world is all wonderfully put forth by God, and what is so remarkable is the fact that God's works are equally good, whether seen from near or from far or through a microscope and at any stage. An artist will ask you to stand in a special place to see his picture well, and he will not let you see his work at all till it has advanced to a certain stage, as was the case when the King was having his portrait painted by a great artist a few years ago; but, with God's works, they are equally beautiful from every point and at every stage. Nature is lovely at all times; the undeveloped flower or child is often then at its best. What perfect harmony and variety we see in the sunshine, merging into banks of shadow and clouds and the blue of the sky, with the green of the grass beneath. No two flowers are alike, no two leaves nor buds nor persons, and yet all are perfect and all made out of nothing. People sometimes think they need to travel to see the world for education. For my part, I think that the works of God are much the same in one place as in another, and in travelling the object should be to appreciate more and more the wonders of God's creations. Everything he

does is in such perfect order and harmony. The animal creation is perfect in its way, and it knows when it has had enough, which humans often do not. The chicken, as it drinks, lifts its head, as it were, in thanksgiving to heaven. We, too, should lift up our eyes in admiration and thankfulness.

My second point is that you *depend* upon God for everything. Not a hair of your head falls without him. He has said : "Without me you can do nothing." This is so, even in sin, for the Bible uses the expression : "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins."¹ Your dependence upon God does not demand any miracle to prove it. Miracles do not happen in these days because they are not needed.

In the early days of Christianity God made use of them to help in establishing the faith. Miracles always demanded faith from those who were witnesses; without it there was no miracle. God does not give them to us now; we are better without them, except perhaps at Naples, where the people are, as it were, still children, and need, as S Paul says, to be fed with milk. Not fully realizing our dependence on God, some people try to plan out their lives for themselves. All that really matters is that we should live our lives as God has intended. Wait and see what his plan for you is. Marriage or no marriage are equally good, provided they are in accordance with God's plan for you. Some people, by studying their health, hope to live to eighty, but it is all in vain, and will be as God pleases. General Ellis fell dead at the Gala Opera, between the Court Physician and the Court Surgeon. Nothing avails when God rings the bell. It all rests

¹ Isaias xlivi, 24.

with him. Wait and listen to his voice. What you have to do is to look to God with childlike simplicity. Ask him to make you sweet, and a joy and a pleasure to himself, like a humble little geranium plant which I saw lately in a cottage window, turning to the light, and giving brightness and cheerfulness to the little home. Grow a little flower like this for God. All the great things of God's creation belong to everyone alike, rich and poor.

The air, the sunshine, the landscapes, trees, birds, flowers. So do most of the great things of the world. The cathedrals, museums, national galleries belong as much to the poor as to the rich. Possessions do not make for happiness, and it is a fact that none are so happy as priests and nuns, who have nothing. They need so little and are so easily pleased. A lark in Mount Street sings so joyously I called to thank its owner, for its voice seemed to be a little thrill out of heaven. He was an Israelite, and who knows but that the bird's voice may lead him upwards, too! Our life here is but for a little space. Let us so use it as to gain eternity!

SECOND DAY: II

I want you to consider how you are to use the creatures of God.

First, *time*. How do you spend it? We know how our Lord spent his days in going about doing good, in prayer, and in ministering to the people.

Have a fixed time and order in your life. Live so that you may be able to give God an account of your time.

Then, *money*. Be careful how you spend it, and put it to a good use. Put method into your manner of spending. Decide beforehand what you will give to. Subscriptions which can be depended upon serve the double purpose of giving security to the charity, and of affording an additional interest to yourself. Don't give for anything which you expect to get in return—praise, your name in the paper, and suchlike. Give so that God may bid you enter into his kingdom as your reward.

Don't be afraid to give tips to porters and suchlike for fear that the money will be badly spent. If God gave us nothing which we do not turn to a good account, where should we be?

Then, *talents*. Even the stupidest of us have some talent or other. It may be sympathy, social gifts, music, drawing, work. Whatever it may be, do the best you can to turn it to account for God. Even an ugly and useless kettleholder, or a daub of a picture, may be pleasing to God, if done for his sake.

In society Catholics are always known, and you can do good where a priest or a nun has no chance, by your grace, your bearing, and your example in social circles. We Catholics have the eye of the world upon us. More is expected from us, so they try when they can to pull us back. Don't give them a chance.

Keep occupied. Don't waste time on papers and novels.

Then *prayer*. Whilst dressing, feed your soul with mental prayers and ejaculations. S Francis spent a whole night with the words: "My God and my all," and you couldn't do better. We are so afraid of look-

ing silly, but we needn't fear mental prayers many times a day.

Use your time with order and method. Make use of these creatures for God.

SECOND DAY: III

We were sent into this world with an object. We have a mission, and that mission is to accomplish the purpose for which God has put us here.

This is called "The End of Man." Life is lent to us to fulfil our mission, and we must carry it out faithfully. If a commercial traveller were sent out to S. Africa by some great firm to receive orders and generally to further the interests of the business, and he were to spend his time in amusement and folly, to the injury of the purpose for which he was sent, how would the firm be likely to deal with such a man?

Let us apply the same to ourselves. We are sent here to prepare for eternity. God has made us for something worthy of himself—that is, he has made us for himself. He has given us a mind to know him and a heart to love him, so that we may praise him and serve him. What though we meet with sorrows and troubles on our journey through life, God can make them all up to us in eternity. That we have troubles is a sign of God's care for us. A mother loves her child, and she does not allow him all he wants, or he would swallow the trinkets he likes to put in his mouth. She doesn't give him all he wants, because she knows better than the child what is good for him.

God deals with us in the same way. As a mother makes excuses for her child if it is troublesome, so God makes allowances for us. Yet, how badly we treat him in return for all he gives to us. Is there any earthly friend, however near and dear, who could forgive such treatment as we have given to God?

So let us praise him for his goodness. "His praise shall be always in my mouth." Praise him for what he is in himself, as a mother praises her child for what she sees in him that is good and beautiful. God is all perfection. His majesty and glory, and goodness and mercy, and his perfections will last for ever. He is not as the rose, whose beauty soon fades. God is always the same. Reverence his majesty. Be enthusiastic for God. In these days enthusiasm is not in fashion. Nothing is good enough. We must criticize everything.

Reverence him in Nature. In the blue sky, and the stars, and the sea, and the flowers. All Nature has the hall-mark of God upon it. Reverence it and reverence God's work in humanity, fallen though you may see it to be. Reverence the priesthood. Don't criticize so much. Priests must be nearer to God owing to their sacred calling. Reverence the altar and the tabernacle. Live in the Sacred Presence, in reverence and love and service.

A mother loves her child and serves it. She nurses and cherishes it because love is service. She does not let it go, or drop it, because it is troublesome, neither does God drop us, or we should soon drop down to hell.

The end of life for us all is praise, reverence, and

love, and we should increase in love day by day. This is a beautiful and simple life. Christ, and him crucified. For I am persuaded that neither life nor death nor any other creature, nor things present nor things to come, can separate me from him to all eternity.

SECOND DAY: IV

I want you to realize that we are creatures of God, and that as such we depend entirely upon God. But we are something more than God's creatures, more even than his servants. We are his children! In this we are different from unbelievers and pagans, because we have been made children of God by baptism. God has willed it so that the waters of baptism should mark us for his own. God adopts us, not as a child may be adopted by a foster father, yet cannot partake of the same blood or name, although it may be brought up as a member of the family. God adopts us in a more complete sense, and makes us partakers of his divinity and of his nature. We become his heirs, and, *therefore*, we are co-heirs with Christ. We have been made partakers of the same grace and nature as Christ by baptism. Having become his children, God loves us and will never forget us. Our Lord pointed out to his disciples how even a hen gathers her children under her wing in protecting love, and God's love for his children is unfailing.

Children are sometimes encouraged to follow in the footsteps of ancestors who have distinguished themselves in various ways. We have the saints always there as our examples, whom we can follow, and, as we believe in the Communion of Saints as something

real and definite, we can call upon them and ask them to pray for us and to help us.

Westminster Abbey was once adorned with statues of the saints, but they have all been turned out and replaced with monuments to men who have been good soldiers, sailors, poets, or statesmen, irrespective of what sort of lives they lived, or, indeed, of whether they were even Christians at all!

I don't understand the frame of mind which permits such things. It is a puzzle to me.

We, as children of God, have the divine life in us. The key to the kingdom of heaven is in our hand. But the divine life within us needs food. All life needs food. The crystal may add to its dimensions from without by adding to its component parts; but that is not life.

The glory of the lily of the valley is drawn from the soil in which it grows. The higher the organism the more food and the higher quality is needed. Material life needs suitable material food, else it cannot live. In the same way the divine life needs divine food. Our Lord himself said that unless we eat his Flesh and drink his Blood there is no life in us. Some of his disciples found this a hard saying, and walked no more with him. Our Lord asked Peter if he also would leave him? He answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Our Lord has told us where to find the divine food we need. We have it with us in the Tabernacle. It is the only nourishment which our spiritual life requires that it may be built up in strength.

That is the meaning of the Blessed Sacrament. Ask there for what you want. Come, and you will get it,

without money and without price. Let us never be cold or tepid in our love for it. Material dainties please us for a time, but we cannot take more than a certain amount.

With the Blessed Sacrament it is just the opposite. The oftener you come the more you will need it, till you will feel that you cannot live without it, and I want you all to come to that.

THIRD DAY: I

Never forget that you have been bought with a price. There is only one evil in the world, and that is sin. A longer or a shorter life doesn't matter; in any case, it lasts only a short time; looks, health, wealth, success, all these things are of small importance.

What is important is that you should keep a right estimate of *sin*. Sin, in these days, is treated as of little consequence. People argue that as we are not responsible for our height, our looks, or our nervous system, so likewise, if we are dishonest or untruthful, we are to be pitied and not blamed.

As Catholics we must not listen to such arguments. We must take the true measure of sin from God, from the Bible, the Testaments, from à Kempis, and from the Catholic Church. The standard for the measure of sin is the cross. Our Lord on the cross shows us the height and depth, and breadth and width of sin. Sin has done this to Jesus Christ. It tears him to pieces. It is easy to become demoralized as to the importance of sin. The senses soon adapt themselves to their surroundings. That is why first impressions are usually the most trustworthy. It is so easy to get used to

inferior things in art, and even to admire what is really bad, simply because we are used to it.

It is the same with sin. People get careless. They talk unkindly of each other, and think it doesn't matter. But it does matter, and it is better to be dull than to be uncharitable. In church I have seen people holding out for "my place" as if it really mattered. Let us keep a high standard of virtue. A man told me that he didn't really see any harm in things of which we were speaking, and I said: "Let me ask you one question. Was that your view before you had ever done any of these things?" He couldn't say it was.

Training is needed before we can practice the arts well, but no training is needed to sin. If once we begin to let ourselves go, the importance of sin seems to grow less. Evil thoughts will sometimes come into our minds which we cannot help, but we can resist them, and send them going; on the other hand, we can let them have their way and amuse ourselves with them. If a bad thought comes, say to it, "Be off"; turn to something else, if it is only to a snatch of some comic song! Switch it off! If you found a snake curling itself up your body, wouldn't you quickly shake it off or snatch it up and throw it from you for fear of a sting which might give you blood-poisoning? Do the same with a bad thought. A bad thought resisted is a meritorious thing. God has put us here to fight and to win our spurs, like a soldier covered with scars and medals! Meet your temptations in that spirit. Beware of sin. Be refined and clean before God, like the seabird which shakes off the drops of water from its wings as it flies up into the blue and gold!

Have you a right view of sin? Look into yourself and ask yourself, How have I spent my life? How have I sinned and helped others to sin? Remember that as a Catholic you are specially favoured, and that therefore all the more is required from you. Get the right measure of sin. The cross is that measure.

It is also the measure of hell, for if there had been no hell the cross would not have been needed.

Remember, you are not your own; you are bought with a price. Take this thought, and ask our Lord that he may never permit you in life nor in death to be separated from him.

THIRD DAY: II

Ask yourselves often the question, "Whose am I?" and mark the answer: "You are not your own; for you are bought with a great price." Our Lord pleads with us not to forget this when we fall into sin. He seems to say to us: "How can you do this when I have paid such a price for you?" Try and remember this all your life. Say to him in quite simple words "Dear Lord, I am thine in life and in death. I will never sin against thee nor grieve thee." How are you going to carry out such a promise? S Paul says: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection." Hair shirts and other disciplines are not needful for us. What we have to do is to crucify the flesh by refusing to give to the body all the things it wants and which we know are bad for it. Power is needed to exercise this self-denial. Grow this power. The world to-day is like a willow-tree, yielding in every direction to each changing breath. Do not be like that. Be as a Catholic oak-tree, firm

and strong. Cultivate this strength. Do not go in for high flights of sanctity which are not practical.

The devil is always ready to meet us at our weakest point. The story of Adam and Eve shows this, whether we take it literally or figuratively. It applies to the early stages of almost all sin. Sin starts often unintentionally and develops gradually. The means may be bad books, or plays, or drink, vanity or pride, or other means. The evil grows, and we deceive ourselves till too late in thinking that no harm will come of it. What is your own predominant passion? See if you cannot trace its gradual development to some small beginning. Read the story of Adam and Eve, and you will find it gives a picture of your own life.

THIRD DAY : III

Our Lord taught his disciples by parables, and we will consider now the parable of Dives and Lazarus. In these days people don't care to believe in the devil and in hell and in eternal punishment, but, as Catholics, we have to believe the teaching of Christ and not try to improve upon it. We accept his authority, and we leave private judgement to those outside the Church. Lazarus was poor, and he sat at the gate of the rich man and asked for food, and no man gave to him. He must have seen the wealth of the rich man at whose gate he lay, and that must have been an addition to his trials. We are not told that Lazarus ever did anything particularly good, beyond the fact that he was patient under his sufferings. When he died, our Lord says, he was carried by angels to heaven. This is an enormous comfort and consolation to us, for it proves

that great things are not required to enable us to get to heaven. Those of us who feel that their lives have been useless failures can take heart. The rich man died, and our Lord says he was buried in hell. Why? What had he done wrong? We are not told of anything specially wicked. But what good had he done? We learn from this that if we want blessings from God we must do something to deserve them. Our Lord describes the chasm which exists between heaven and hell as too deep to be passed or bridged over. It is good for us to think sometimes of hell, but it is still better to look up to heaven and to live so as to get there. It depends solely upon ourselves. God will not help us to go to hell, but he will help us to go to heaven, and he has prepared places for us there. We may naturally ask ourselves the question: "If Dives, who does not seem to have been a great sinner, went to hell, why not I?" The answer is: "Learn to do your duty. Live the divine life of the soul." Examine your conscience and see what is wrong with you. Maybe it is sloth or envy or pride? If you are free from such sins it is because of the help which comes from God. Never neglect your religion. Let us use our opportunities and determine to send ourselves to heaven. God will help us, and the means of grace, the sacraments, will prove a staircase on a sloping incline to the throne of God. If only we try hard enough we are all sure to get to heaven. See if there is anything wrong in your life, and take care to put it right. Think over these things. Ask for grace to look into hell and to realize it as a place to avoid, saying the *Miserere* whilst you do so. The fear of hell helps to keep people straight. It is not a popular belief, and you will be told that you are not

"keeping up with the times." Perhaps not, but you are doing what is better—you are keeping up with eternity.

Be simple children of Christ, look to him as your Headmaster, and learn of him till the time comes for you to go home for your eternal holiday, and please God I shall be there to meet you.

THIRD DAY: IV

The story of the Magdalen is full of consolation and encouragement for us. Sinner as she was, she sought out our Lord in Simon's house. She walked in towards him as one asleep. She fell at his feet, she bathed them with her tears, she wiped them with her beautiful hair, and she poured on them the precious nard which she had probably intended for herself. The thought of all her sins overwhelmed her and filled her heart with sorrow. She wept out her heart in repentance and was filled with resolutions for the future. Our Lord watched her, and he brought the Light of the World into her heart. He wiped out all her past sins so that they were forgiven and gone. Our Lord has made more use of her than of any other of the saints as an example to us of the complete forgiveness which God will grant to sinners where there is perfect contrition and sorrow. Abiding sorrow is the best test of loyalty and love. You know how sorry you feel when you have hurt anyone you love. The thought comes to you long afterwards: "I wish I hadn't done that."

Resolve to make frequent acts of contrition. Say the *Miserere* morning, noon, and night till you know it by

heart and it bubbles up in your heart almost in your sleep. Nothing can be more beautiful. Make your frequent acts of contrition, not because you are anxious about your past sins, or for fear that they are not forgiven, but because you are sorry. You can never be too sorry and can never tell God so too often. Imitate the Magdalen in her penance and in her contrition, and depend upon the strong arm of God for your support.

FOURTH DAY: I

In the simple little village of Nazareth in Galilee in Palestine, a province of Rome, there lived a simple little girl, and to her—whether at work or at prayer we do not know—there appeared one day the Archangel, bearing the great news that she was chosen out of all the world to be the Mother of the Redeemer.

God, in looking down from heaven and seeing the sins and shortcomings of the world, decides to come down himself for our salvation. He takes upon him flesh like ours and selects Mary for his Mother. We do not know *why* she was chosen. She had done nothing special that we know of to earn the distinction. She was not as a rose nor as a lily, but as a hidden violet, and our Lord stooped to pick it. This is a great lesson for us. It makes us see what God really wants of us. He wishes us each to live our own lives, just where we are placed. If you do this you will be well pleasing to him, for he has said: “Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.” God has made our Lady his Daughter; Christ has made her his Mother; the Holy Ghost has made her his Spouse. Are we devout enough to her? If you possess the true Catholic spirit,

you will have a devotion for our Lady. If you have not got it, create it, grow it, and cultivate it. Trample underfoot anything which holds you back from a true Catholic spirit.

God's human life and his birth of the Blessed Virgin is so wonderful to think of that the mind almost reels under it. Faith and grace are needed to realize it. Say, "O Lord, I am thine in life and in death," and you will feel that you are not your own, but are bought with a price. Think of this, pray for faith and grace, and ask God to give you great light and great fervour.

FOURTH DAY: II

A remarkable thing has lately happened in Liverpool. A Protestant cathedral was to be built, and from one hundred competitors the committee selected the designs of Gilbert Scott, son of the late well-known architect of that name. Then, to their horror, they found he was a Catholic! However, it couldn't be helped, and the work went forward. The first part of the cathedral has just been opened with a great function, and this is the lady chapel, having around it, by way of decoration, all the symbols of our Lady and of the *Magnificat*!

Our Lady is coming back to England! At the late King's lying in state it was remarkable how many Catholics were there, who touched the bier with their rosaries and who crossed themselves. A sign of the times! But to come to the *Magnificat*. The first thing which strikes us is the long journey of eighty miles, on foot, which our Lady made to visit her cousin Elizabeth. As the meeting takes place our Lady breaks

out into those wondrous words: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." What other woman who ever lived would have dared to make such a prophecy respecting herself?

Is it not a fact that the great people of this world are all soon forgotten? A new generation arises, and the great names of the past are nothing to them. The perspective of time completely changes the view of people and of things.

Even the members of the magnificent Roman Court of our Lady's time. Who remembers these names now?

But our Lady's words have come true, and they have been, and will be, sung everywhere and for all time. She alone, of all people who were ever born into this world, has dared to say: "All generations shall call me blessed." Her words are a wonderful token and proof that when we proclaim her dignity and her sanctity our attitude is right. And as time goes on her worship grows, and will grow on as long as the world lasts.

Our Lady has lifted womanhood into the high place of dignity which it now occupies. It is woman's place to minister, and we see our Lady minstering to her Son and protecting him till the end.

Without Mary in her proper place the scheme of the Redemption is out of joint, and woman would have no better place than the ladies of the Sultan's harem. It was Christianity which lifted woman in the social scale and gave her her proper place.

Mary's dignity is such that God could raise her to no higher position. He selected her to be the Mother of Christ. Christ might have come to earth like Adam—simply created—but then woman would have been

left out altogether. As Eve had ruined Adam, so God, in his goodness, makes use of woman to carry out his plan for the salvation of the fallen world, and he shows wonderful deference to woman by selecting one for his Mother. Thus the second woman blots out the work of the first.

Mary's dignity is unique, and she is lifted by God into the splendour of the Divine Life. Her sanctity defies the wealth of words. It cannot be expressed. She is immaculate; grace adds to her merit and to her glory for eternity. Our Lord gives her to us as our Mother, at the foot of the cross. Let us dedicate ourselves to her. So be it.

FOURTH DAY: III

Let us think of the Nativity, and begin with the journey which our Lady took with S Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Tradition says that our Lady made the journey riding upon an ass, and that she was very poor and without comforts. After a journey of three or four days they reached Bethlehem, and searched in vain for a room. There was "no room for them in the inn," so they went into a stable, and there, between the ox and the ass, our Lord was born. Stop for a moment and compare these poor surroundings of our Lord's birth with the luxuries of the present day. I do not say there is sin in having comforts and nice things, but I *do* say that it is wrong to attach too much importance to these things or to be discontented if things are not as perfect as we think they should be. Let us be patient under small inconveniences and annoyances. Say to yourself: "Our blessed Lord had far

less than this." Picture to yourself his first home on earth. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. If he had chosen, he might have come in pomp and magnificence, but he chose, instead, poverty and humility. When you see the contrast between our Lord's surroundings and your own, does it not strike you that it would be more suitable if you exchanged places and took the lower one yourself?

What a drop from heaven was the Incarnation of our Lord! It is a great contemplation to see the Majesty of God reduced to this—for me.

See his Mother ministering to him, and ask yourself : "Is there nothing that I, also, can do for him?" Yes, you can adore him, you can thank him, you can love him and follow him. Even if it costs you a little pain and self-denial, this does you no harm. It may even be a little help to you to remember him.

There are many little things which we can do for his sake. Amidst plenty there are more opportunities for little acts of self-denial than in poverty, and when you have undertaken to do them the great thing is to keep them up. It is by little things that we show our love for our friends—little acts of thoughtfulness, little delicate attentions. Little tokens of this kind show our love.

Do this to our Lord. Have charity, gentleness, and contentment. Be firm with yourself.

"To myself a judge,
To my neighbour an indulgent mother."

Neither talent, nor money, nor position are needed to do all this for our Lord; only four little letters, which spell the word LOVE.

FOURTH DAY: IV

THE HIDDEN LIFE AT NAZARETH

Thirty years were spent by our Lord at Nazareth, a most obscure village in a most obscure province of the Roman Empire. We hear of him at the age of twelve years, when his parents lost him. Then he retires again into obscurity, living quietly at home, sharing the uneventful family life and occupied at the carpenter's bench.

Then he goes forth to prepare to die.

This hidden life of our Lord's shows us the great lesson that it matters nothing *who* you are, but *what* you are. Before God social distinctions are as nothing. High or low, we are all equal in his sight. What matters is whether you belong to him. Ask yourself this: "Am I his, absolutely and entirely? Am I there—in the hollow of his hand?" All religion means this, and means this equally from the highest to the lowest: "I belong to you, in life and in death."

Your heart may be as obscure as was our Lord's life at Nazareth, but if you truly belong to him all is well. Grow Nazareth in your heart.

FIFTH DAY: I

We will now consider a little the public life of our Lord, and first we notice how constantly he reverts to prayers. We find him at prayer on every occasion. This is to teach us and to remind us of the necessity of prayer, to help us to carry out our lives well. We live in days of so much "rush" that we don't pause enough to reflect, but one thing is certain—that we

must bring prayer into our lives in some form or another. It may be by means of meditation, though that does not come easily to everyone. It may be the *Rosary*, said carefully and thoughtfully, or the psalms, or the litanies, or hymns. If none of these appeal to you, and if you feel you have no appetite for prayer, then create an appetite. Time is wanted for efficient prayer. Place yourself in God's presence as an act of faith, of love, and of contrition, and pray. Our Lord prayed and he worked. He was always busy and doing. He was full of enthusiasm as he went about amongst the people, being equally at home with them all, be they rich or poor, old or young, sick or healthy, always ready to give his love and his generous sympathy. How touching is the story in to-day's gospel, where our Lord, after a long, hard day, in which he had fed the five thousand, came towards his disciples, walking upon the water when they were caught in the storm. S Peter cried out to be allowed to come to our Lord upon the waters, and only faith was wanting for the full accomplishment of his prayer. So, if we ask our Lord, he will help us to walk to him over the waters of our troubles, whatever they may be. He is always there, and he will hold us up and support us if we go to him bravely and pluckily and grasp his outstretched hand.

The question sometimes comes, how far it is right to allow our spiritual time to be broken into for the sake of others?

The answer is, It is right to allow it when it is done out of charity and kindness, and for the sake of others.

But never make excuses to keep away. Use your common sense, and allow your time for prayer and

for church to be sacrificed only when you feel that you are carrying out God's will by so doing, and as an act of kindness or of charity to others.

Our Lord's public life was made up of prayer, and work, and charity. He worked for others, and went about doing good. Yet he never waited to see what thanks he was to receive. Not that ingratitude did not wound him. We know it did by his question : "Where are the nine?" when he healed the ten lepers. Ask yourself, where is your gratitude. He wants gratitude from you, for your own sake, not for his own. During his public life, whether he received thanks or not, he went on just the same with his works of charity and mercy.

We, on the contrary, do not care to give, or to do good, unless we receive proper thanks and recognition. We ought to care nothing for these things. On the contrary, you should thank God if you get no thanks here, for then you will have your reward from him! Let us do our good works and give to the poor even if our efforts seem to be useless and unappreciated. Do what you can. Give your time to God, and he will make what use he likes of your work, done for his sake. There is no hurry, and you may not live to see the result, but that does not make it any the less a work for God.

A mother may pray for her children, and yet she may fail to see any answer to her prayers. Yet she must continue her prayers in trust and confidence, and God will answer them in his own time.

Besides prayer and work, our Lord showed so much charity and kindness in his public life. It is so easy to find fault. A carping and critical spirit is so easily

developed. It is so easy to pull things to pieces! No training is required for that!

Be silent when you can say nothing good of another, or be ingenious in finding something good to say! Take care to be kind in your thoughts, and generous and helpful. Our Lord was kind to everyone! There was only one class of person for whom he ever had a hard word, and that was for hypocrites!

For everyone else he was full of love and compassion, and his invitation to us all is still, as it was then : "Come unto me!"

FIFTH DAY: II

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHARITY

First: We must realize that all of us are made in the image of God.

Second: That all creatures belong utterly and inalienably to him, and depend upon him for everything.

Realizing this, we ought to respect the whole human race. Even when we see mankind in its fallen state our hearts should be filled, not with anger, but with sorrow to see God's family and his work so degraded and apparently a failure. We should do as he does, try to win the erring ones back.

Our Lord died for them. If we think of this it will make us more humane and more anxious than ever to win them back. We should pray for those who are being tempted into a wrong course, as we should pray also for those who have fallen.

Then, further, as Catholics, members of the body of Christ's Church, we must have his spirit in our hearts and must be in sympathy with one another.

We have all the same faith, the same motives; we all depend upon our Lord, and we have all the same interests. Should not this bind us together in bands of sympathy?

This charity does not come of itself; it is a supernatural gift of God. You will love your neighbour in the same measure in which you love God. It may be hard to feel kindly towards everyone. Even good people are sometimes trying and cantankerous, but one who has this supernatural grace takes a different view of people, however tiresome they may be. To be a human saint requires fighting stuff, because there is so much to overcome. Look at our Lord. He chose his twelve disciples from amongst the inhabitants of his neighbourhood, and yet what disappointing companions they were. How cowardly in his danger, how untrustworthy. But when the Holy Ghost had come upon them, what a change! The supernatural gift of God made new men of them, and there was not one amongst them who did not give his life for our Lord! From the first our Lord had seen them, not as they were then, but as they would be after they had found the supernatural life.

Imitate our Lord in his kindness to others. Parents and children sometimes do not get on; they say they do not understand each other. We do not always like the people with whom our lot is thrown, but if we take the trouble to study them we shall find something to like in everyone. It is useless to expect from others what they haven't got! Temperaments are various, and each person has his own variety. Don't expect what isn't there, and then be disappointed if you don't find it. Then, don't criticize so much. We shall never

become spiritual if we are always finding out faults in others. Have charity, and, as to this, I give you these hints: Begin by making a resolution that you will never say anything unkind of any member of your household. Keep to this. If you are the head of your household you must, of course, correct faults where necessary, but do it kindly, and say nothing which will wound. If you keep this resolution well you will then be ready to develop this system further, and by degrees you will succeed in conquering yourself altogether. Don't undertake too much at first, or you will fail. The temperament of women causes them to be easily attracted and repelled, and they are therefore specially liable to take likes and dislikes, and to be easily impressed by differing personalities. Make it a rule to try and see nice things in people. Look out for them, and say nice things of them. We shall always find something nice in others if we really try.

You may not find it always easy. It is like alpine climbing, which must be hand over hand till you get to the top.

Put your heart into your spiritual life and keep it in the bands of charity.

FIFTH DAY: III

ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

How much our Lord made of this in his teachings to his disciples. A year before its institution he spoke of it as a figure of what was to come. On the day after he had fed the five thousand, when he blessed, and brake, and gave over and over again till all were filled, and

he had walked to the disciples on the water, the people came in multitudes to see him. He spoke to them and said that they were come because they had seen the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and he went on to say: "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed." He was heard, but was not understood. The multitudes were astonished at his doctrine. Some of them said: "This is a hard saying," and many left him. Indeed, some of his disciples walked no more with him. Then he asked S Peter, as the spokesman: "Will you also go away?" I think it must have been a sad moment for our Lord when he asked this, but S Peter understood that the Teacher must be right, and that the doctrine was right, too. Even if he could not understand it, he believed in his Teacher, so he says: "Lord, to whom shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life!" S Peter was first, then, in his acknowledgement of our Lord's divinity. He was first at the tomb. He has been first always, and he is first to this day.

It is impossible to explain the Blessed Sacrament. All the senses except hearing are deceived. But for God's word, it would be impossible to believe that the few words of consecration should convert the bread and the wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord. That is the mystery of Faith, and although it is such a mystery, it seems to be no difficulty to Catholics, and has been the central devotion of the Catholic

Church for 2,000 years. The Blessed Sacrament is the light and the food of the Church. We should starve without it. It sums up for us all our Lord's teaching. He lives his life over again for us in the Tabernacle. He lives the hidden life, born again for each individual, and all may come day by day and find him at the same table. At night a call comes; someone is dying, and the viaticum is asked for. The priest takes the Blessed Sacrament from the Tabernacle and carries it through the streets to the poor passing soul. There is his public life repeating itself. His Passion is all repeated when men make bad Communions, betray him with a kiss, and crucify him afresh.

It is all perfectly wonderful. How grateful we ought to be for such a blessing.

People sometimes wish that they could have lived in the days of our Lord, but I think things are best as they are for us. We might not have known him, we might not have followed him, and for my part I like him to be where he places himself for us, in his Nazareth Tabernacle surrounded by his own flowers, and with candles from the wax of his own bees. We sometimes think our lives sad, dull, wretched; we feel the sun has gone out of life for us; we are alone, and troubles seem to overpower us. If this is so with you, go to the Tabernacle. Live our Lord's life over again with him. There are treasures at hand which we know not of, and our Lord is there always waiting for us!

How ashamed we should be of our complaints when we have such a Saviour to console us.

"Soul of my Saviour, sanctify my breast;
Body of Christ, be thou my saving Guest;
Blood of my Saviour, bathe me in thy tide."

FIFTH DAY : IV

GETHSEMANI

Here in the Garden of Gethsemani we see our dear Lord making his great act of contrition for the sins of the whole world. So overwhelming were these sins that the blood poured through the very pores of his skin in his agony. That act reconciled the world to God, and all who accept the benefits of his Passion, with faith, love, obedience, and contrition, will share eternal life with him in heaven.

SIXTH DAY : I

OUR LORD'S MOCK TRIAL BEFORE HEROD

Herod, as you know, having divorced his own wife, was living with his brother Philip's wife in the greatest luxury and splendour at the Golden House.

He heard with interest of S John the Baptist, and sent for him to come and preach before the Court. S John, that simple, straight, and strong precursor of Christ, took as his text: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Before the sermon was ended S John was seized, hurried off to a dungeon (so horrible as can only be seen in the East), and remained there while Herod's so-called wife planned her revenge. The day came when the daughter of Herodias had danced before Herod, so as to inflame his passions, and in his delight at her performance he promised her anything she liked to ask for up to the half of his kingdom. Prompted by her mother, she asked for the head of S John, which was brought on a charger.

Picture to yourself the type of man which Herod

was! Ready to barter heaven for his lust. Before him our Lord was brought, and Herod questioned him. No doubt he expected some interesting or exciting incident to occur. He had heard of our Lord's miracles; perhaps he would work one to ensure his escape, and Herod was "glad" of the opportunity of seeing him. But to all Herod's questioning, what does our Lord do? He simply looks down and says *nothing*. His treatment of Herod was different from that which he accorded to Annas, to Caiphas, or to Pilate. He answered each of these, but before Herod he is *silent*.

When all attempts to get him to speak had failed, they set him at naught, they made fun of him, and clad him in a white garment.

See, from our Lord's refusal to address Herod, how horrible in his sight is such a life as that which Herod was leading. Try to realize how impurity in every form, whether in thought, word, action, alone or in company, from books or any other source, darkens the mind, weakens the will, and ruins the heart. Even God can do nothing with such people. Our Lord stood silent before Herod! The whole tide of their being is affected, and in the end they even fail to see that there is anything wrong in their course of life! They become completely demoralized, they lose the Faith, and give themselves over entirely to their lust.

The possibility of coming to some such state as this exists for us all. Passions may present themselves. If they do, deal with them at once, bid them come to heel, or the mind soon becomes darkened and the conscience stifled. It is so easy to say, "It doesn't matter! Everyone does it!" Do not think a word of

warning vain. Retreat is a time to look such things in the face, and to guard against them. From the oldest here all are liable to fall into temptation, so long as they are in the flesh. No one is safe.

I have seen Vesuvius snowclad and lying peacefully in the sun. Yet it vomits out fire which destroys all it reaches.

With woman it will be the same if she gives way to passions. Don't say: "It couldn't happen to me!" Say rather: "It could." To those who have given themselves up to these things our Lord would say, as he said to the foolish virgins: "I know you not." No good can be done for them. How sad, after all our Lord has done for us all. Then they try to defend themselves. They blame the Church. They say she tries to frighten them, and that the Church and her code of morality and her commandments are all of no account, and at last the poor souls fall, like Herod! Always love our Lord, sink at his Feet, win his smile. Hear him say, as to the Magdalen: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." This is the right spirit.

Until the soul is free from the flesh it is never safe; it may yet be dragged into the mud. Retreat gives an ideal time for the right spirit to dominate us, and to help us to escape from temptation. You are never safe unless you are on your guard. The enemy is always there and on the lookout!

Be brave and simple, be pure for God. Make your acts of contrition at the moment; do not even wait to come to the sanctuary. If you are truly sorry, our Lord is so pleased with your sorrow and your trust that the past will, at once, be forgiven and forgotten.

SIXTH DAY: II

I want to impress upon you that you must live your life *in* and *with* and *for* God. Live your life thoroughly. Whatever you have to do, let it be done thoroughly. Let your prayers be thorough. Perhaps you will sometimes feel tired, and dry, and will seem to have nothing to say, and be full of distractions. Yet, if you do your best and are sorry for your failure, and if you rise from your knees resolved to do and to hear God's will, your prayer will have been a good one. You will have made an act of faith and of hope, and of self-denial, and of training of your heart.

At another time you may feel yourself full of holy thoughts, and you may rise from your knees, thinking what beautiful prayers you have made, and soon afterwards you may be cross about some trifle. Which prayer do you think was the more pleasing to God?

Next I would ask you, How do you spend your time? Have you got a hobby? When you are tired or worried, what have you got to turn to? You should have something definite. Perhaps reading (sensible books, mind!), or work; work for the poor, or painting, or music, or what not. But let it be *something* special, to prevent idleness. Cultivate any talent you have for your free hours. See what you can do. Have a useful hobby, and one, if possible, which will be useful to others. Don't be idle!

Another hint I would give you: Never correct or find fault at night. Never write an angry letter at night. Wait till the morning. Remember not to act upon impulse. There is never a day but temptation may come. Our Lord has said he will come as a thief

in the night without notice, and the temptation also comes suddenly, as a bolt from the blue. We are always in the midst of change, but, whatever comes, be self-possessed. Stand up under the storm. Be brave for God. God is testing you. You have pledged yourself to him, and he is trying you to see how you can stand the test. After Retreat a reaction often comes. This is natural, for when we have been living apart a return to the world brings extra temptation.

Sometimes a nasty word may be said to us, and this quite upsets us. Don't mind it. Let them say it. It hurts them more than you if it is not true, and if it *is* true, then you deserve it. If you are told what others have said against you, never mind. Say, "Did she really?" and wait. Perhaps it wasn't true. We must pity slanderers because it spoils them for God.

We must expect trials and temptations. S James has said: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God promised to them that love him." There is never a day without its trials, and Christ's follower is calm, accepts it, and is elevated by it.

Now, as to confession. It has sometimes been said to me: "I have nothing to confess, Father, and I am so miserable that I can think of nothing to say." Don't be miserable. On the contrary, thank God for it, and say: "God has been so good to me, and, seeing my weakness, he has not allowed me to be tempted since my last confession; but I feel how many sins I have committed in my past life, and I wish to renew my sorrow for offending God, especially for [whatever sins you like to mention].". This will be a satisfactory confession when you are not conscious of any fresh

sin, and it will satisfy God. Go to confession, even if you have nothing to say; first, because you can't tell God too often how sorry you are for having offended him; and, second, go as an act of discipline, humility, and contrition, and go to get a fresh supply of sacramental grace in absolution. So will you be pleasing to God.

Now, as to Holy Communion, people are sometimes uncertain whether to go or not. They can't make up their mind till the last moment. Don't be like that. It is not worthy. I don't wish to lay down any rule as to how often you should go, but I say: "*Go when you can.*" If you feel unworthy, make an act of contrition; say: "Oh, my dear Saviour, I am so sorry for having hurt you. Forgive me!" Then go and get the kiss of peace.

Meet your life, wherever you are placed, with confidence. Be brave and happy. Sing with joy in your heart. Don't be depressed. That gives the devil his chance. Rejoice in the Lord and have the true joyous Catholic Spirit.

SIXTH DAY: III

OUR LORD BEFORE PILATE

The miscarriage of justice in our Lord's trials before Annas and Caiphas was ended, and he was carried before the Roman Governor, who alone could pronounce the death sentence, which the people and the priests had determined should be obtained.

The injustice to which he was subjected must have grieved our dear Lord, and must have been even harder to bear than the insults.

Before Pilate three charges were trumped up:

1. That he had raised a disturbance.
2. That he had made himself out to be a king.
3. That he had forbidden the people to pay tribute.

They were all absolutely untrue. If he had really raised a disturbance against the Roman rule, the people would have followed him to a man. He had never tried to make himself king. On the contrary, the people had proposed it, and he had said: "My kingdom is not of this world." And as to the third charge, our Lord had distinctly said: "Give Cæsar his due." "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

We see by this action of the people and the priests how passion leads us to distort the truth. What must our Lord have felt as he listened to these gross falsehoods from people whom he had served and cared for, healed, and fed, and taught? What a return they were giving him! The moral pain of it all must have been even greater than the physical.

Pilate knew very well that the Jews had delivered him "for envy," so he summons our Lord into his private room, and Jesus stands alone before his judge. Later on the positions will be reversed! Our Lord and Pilate will exchange places! Pilate says to him: "Art thou a king?" The question is put with utter contempt for the poor, disfigured prisoner before him, and our Lord replies: "For this was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth." Here indeed had been our Lord's mission, and our mission, like his, is to bear witness of the truth. Pilate hears our Lord's answer with indifference. It seemed to have nothing to do with the politics of the Roman Government, and, as to *truth*, what, indeed, is truth? So he turns away.

Here it was that Pilate lost his chance. Our Lord gives a chance, but does not force it, and the lost opportunity does not come again. It is like missing an express train: you find yourself left standing on the platform. Then Pilate went out and said to the people: "I find no cause in him." His desire, and that of his wife also, was to let our Lord off. But other charges are brought up, and our Lord makes no answer to them. "Dost thou not hear what they say?" asks Pilate; but again our Lord is silent, and he carries on this golden silence all through his Passion.

Pilate still wishes to effect a release, and offers to take the opportunity of a festival to let off a prisoner. Shall it be our Lord or Barabbas, the murderer? With one accord they select Barabbas. "What, then, shall I do with Jesus that is called Christ?" he asks, and they shout back: "Crucify him!" Our Lord hears it, and doubtless he feels that death would be a happy release from the moral iniquity which was being heaped upon him. Pilate had lost his opportunity, and the downward course followed rapidly. He begins to compromise with his conscience, and he says: "I find no cause in him." Yet he is ready to put our Lord and the murderer Barabbas in the same scale. Principles drop so easily. If once the standard is lowered, the downward course is very rapid. "I find no cause in him," he says, "therefore I will chastise him and let him go." Our Lord has to listen to and to bear the ignominy of all this, and the thought of it must have been almost enough to kill him. Let us stop a moment and ask ourselves what share we have had in all this. Whose handiwork was this? Let us cry out with the Psalmist: "'To thee only have I sinned and have done evil

before thee.' I will adore thy precious blood, and will be thine absolutely from this time forth, in life and in death, depending upon thee for everything. In spite of his love for me, this is what I have done for him." Can sin, then, be such a light matter? What *is* sin? I read it in the scourging of Christ almost to death. This is the tragedy of my sin. See the crown of thorns and the reed put into his sacred hands in derision. Pilate brings him forth to the people and says mockingly, "Behold your King!" whilst they shout back: "Crucify him!"

From this conduct of Pilate's we see that no one can give up principles without slipping into sin. The people cry out: "If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend." There is the secret of it all. The world acts the scene over again to-day in all its stages. The question we ask ourselves is: "What will the world say?" If you are a good Catholic you will not *care* what the world says. They may call you dull and stupid for it, but it doesn't matter. Nothing will help to keep you so strong as feeding on the Blessed Sacrament, lest you slip.

Then Pilate washes his hands and signs the death sentence. Do we not in the same way wash our hands before the world? Be strong for God. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be true and loyal to him. Let each of you make your pledge of love and of loyalty to your Catholic principles, fearing nothing as to what the world may say, so long as you are dominated by them, now and for ever.

SIXTH DAY: IV

THE CRUCIFIXION

Our Lord went before us in his death, as he goes before us in everything; but when the moment of your death comes, though your brow may be fevered, it will not, like his, be tormented with a crown of thorns, and cruel nails will not be fastened through your hands and feet. Whilst our dear Lord hung on the cross no bed of straw was spread around it to give quiet and calm to his last moments. On the contrary, a howling mob stood around mocking him. “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross.”

The first words our Lord spoke from the cross were : “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Oh, when our last hour comes, may we also die as he did—without feelings of enmity towards anyone, at peace with all the world.

His second words were addressed to S John as a young priest before the altar, representing, as he always does, the people : “Woman, behold thy son. Behold thy mother.”

She has been with us ever since. May our death-bed be consoled and comforted by the sweet Mother whom our Lord gave to us then. May she be there, as she was then, to pray for us, and to lead us into the presence of her Son, to be with him in happiness for eternity.

The third words were: “I thirst.” These words of our Lord’s express the concentration of pain and agony. Dives is represented in hell suffering from intolerable thirst. Pray that our burning thirst may be a thirst for God.

Fourth words: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Amongst all that dreadful crowd there was only one who had a kind word for our Lord. One of the two thieves—who hung on either side of him—rebuked the other for his words, and our Lord immediately bestowed upon him an eternal reward. He is so gracious. He accepts the least little offering we make to him, even if it is not given till the last moment. This poor man's repentance, like the Magdalén's, was accepted. Try and have real and true contrition for your sins, and our Lord will answer you as he answered the penitent thief.

Fifth words: "It is consummated." Yes, the work which his heavenly Father had sent him to do was well finished. When your time comes do not let the devil be able to say that it is *his* work which you have done well. Work for God now whilst there is yet time, and give him your life and your love.

Sixth words: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" When we are on our death-bed the devil does his last best with us, and tries to make us feel that God has forsaken us. He takes the opportunity of our weakness to make us review the picture of our life with all its sins. They rise up before us one by one, but at that moment we must take heart, knowing that God is testing us and that he will be with us to the end, as he was with our Lord when he sent out that bitter cry.

Seventh words: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Pray that with our last breath we may trust ourselves, as our dear Lord did, to God's never-failing mercy.

SEVENTH DAY: I
OUR LORD'S RISEN LIFE

Try to realize that during the Passion our Lord had been sold, denied, forsaken, hounded to death by those whom he had healed and fed. He had endured four mock trials and had then passed through death agonies which were absolutely unique. One only kind word had been addressed to him throughout, and that was by the penitent thief on the cross. The whole thing had been a most scandalous triumph of the miscarriage of justice. After such treatment it would have been but natural that our Lord should wish to have nothing more to do with such a people. Yet he rises again and comes amongst them, to be a consolation to those who were sad and weak and sorrowful. This is a beautiful study of his character. It is so elevating and such an education for us. Although his mission had been fulfilled, and the work he had come to do was completed, still he returned to them, and we find him the same kind and compassionate Friend as before. So often, when people become great, they drop those who had been their friends in former days. Our Lord did not do that.

Two of the disciples, full of grief and disappointment, had gone away together for quiet to Emmaus. They had expected things to turn out so very differently. They thought he would have done great things, that he would have turned out the Romans and have set up his own kingdom. They felt sure he would have escaped, and they had even asked to be given places beside him in his kingdom. But now he was dead, like the two thieves beside him! Their hopes

were scattered, and their eyes were not opened; the gift of the Holy Ghost had not yet come upon them.

On their road a Stranger joined them and asked why they were looking so sad. Sadness has a way of making itself seen and felt; the voice, the tears, and even the tread proclaim it; and no doubt the briskness was gone from them as they walked along. The question surprised them, and they asked if he were a stranger there, and had not heard of the death of this Prophet from whom such great things were expected. And as they walked he drew from them the story of all their love for him. Then he proved to them that there was no cause for surprise in what had happened. It had all been foretold by the prophets. Are you not dull to understand? he asks them. As the evening was drawing on, they invited him to stay the night with them, and whilst they were at supper he took bread and blessed it, and brake it and gave it to them. And suddenly their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

Then they realized that he had come back to comfort them. What a revelation of his beautiful character! What an example to us of meeting people in trouble and of how we must all expect to suffer to be partakers of the Bread which makes us members of the Head crowned with thorns.

How human of our Lord to give his disciples surprises and to leave them so joyful! It is a token to us that God leads us into peace, though the path may sometimes be a sorrowful one.

Another story is that of the Magdalen. She goes to the grave, and, seeing it open and empty, she asks—as she supposes—the gardener where they have put him, so that she may take him away. Not that she would

have had strength to move his dead Body. But love takes count of nothing and makes all things seem possible. Love does not stop to consider such words as "can" or "cannot." Love *does* and *acts*. Then our Lord calls her by her name—"Mary!" It was the first time he had done so. She knows him and drops at his feet—she is always at his feet—and he bids her go and tell the disciples that he is risen. How naturally he treats her! How we can learn from it! How human, how simple, and how understanding our Lord is!

Then there is the story of S Thomas. In the lifetime of our Lord, Thomas had been the one to say, "Let us also go that we may die with him," and though he fled with the rest in the hour of danger, yet his disposition was a generous and affectionate one, and his grief at our Lord's death was so great that he cared only to be left alone in his sorrow. We often feel as Thomas did, and say: "Leave me alone." The sun seemed to have set for Thomas. Hope was gone, and in his grief solitude was what he wanted, so, whilst he was absent, perhaps retracing the steps of our Lord during those last terrible scenes, our Lord appears to the other disciples. Thomas hears their story, but cannot believe it, and leaves them again, no doubt in tears of disappointment. "Why," he may have thought, "should the Master have come when I was not there? I loved him as much as they."

Perhaps the lesson was that we must not hug our grief and shut ourselves up in sorrow. We must remain at our post and do our work and our duty. Our sorrows should make us self-sacrificing and thoughtful for others.

Then our Lord came again, and this time Thomas was there. He bids him handle his hands and his feet, according to his own conditions, and Thomas falls at his feet. "My Lord and my God!"

Our Lord is always there. He stands beside you and watches. He likes to see you fight and be strong. As the King said when they wanted to put the Black Prince in safety at the rear of the battle: "Let the boy win his spurs." He is always kind and gentle and sweet. As Risen Christ he is the type of the Divinity of the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. On earth he had his identity, and on the altar he is disguised. Our Lord may appear to us in many forms. It may be as a beggar, or a sufferer, or as one needing consolation or advice; but in whatever form he comes to you he has said: "What you did to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

The Resurrection gives us a beautiful lesson of our Lord's character. He is, like his Bride, the Church, unchangeable and unchanged. Think of his risen life and take comfort in the thought that he is the same always. You are now sowing the seeds which will ripen hereafter in the gardens of heaven. What we sow, that shall we also reap—in eternity.

SEVENTH DAY : II

S John always preached on charity: "Dearly beloved," he said, "let us love one another." We can never exhaust that commandment by exercising mutual love for one another. I have already said that women have natural predilections, therefore you must beware of mere natural affection. Nothing is so difficult to rule

as love. It seems to start so well, with such high motives. Yet you may begin on the snow-line and drift down to the brook, from the brook to the river, and from the river to the ocean, and there find yourself immersed without any possibility of escape. Beware of first beginnings. Affections are so hard to regulate and to manage. Either we love too little or too much.

What a contradiction it is that, though God is absolutely perfect, we have to ask him to help us to love him, whilst all the time we are worshipping his image in fallen man! We make golden calves for ourselves out of all kinds of earthly things, which lead to our fall. Don't worship things that soon fade. Such things will soon tire and disappoint you. Ask God continually to teach you how to love him. Ask yourself where your danger lies. The temptation has begun so easily and smoothly, and it grows by what it feeds on; then the day of temptation comes, and if you have not got God to help you you will go down. Woman is the weaker sex. Let her be careful. Keep your appetites under control. Be guarded in your reading and in your imagination. Feed on the Bread of the strong. Tell our Lord that you would sooner be torn to pieces than injure him, and feed the divine life of the soul.

SEVENTH DAY: III

We end our Retreat as we began. God's love sums it all up for us. We were made for him, and we give him our love, our reverence, and our service. We owe him our love in return for all he gives us. Love is shown in deeds more than in words. A mother's love is measured by her deeds and her service for her child.

With God it is the same. All things were made by God *for us*. His love is for each individually, yet he loves us *all* as he loves each. A mother tries to do her best for her child, yet she does not attain to perfect love. All Creation and Nature is made by God for us. How we ought to praise him for his works! All Creation is hall-marked and stamped with the initials of God. Everything is fashioned by the mind and the hand of God for us. He has given us the power to select and use as we like as a means to an end. We use some things and we abstain from others. So an artist does not use all his colours and his brushes at once; he selects what are suitable for his purpose. This is the secret of his success. He knows what to use and what not to use from amongst his materials. You should bring decision into your life. You should know what you are going to do and what you want and when you want it. When you go shopping, start with a definite idea and be clear in your choice.

God allows us such a large choice. He gives so magnificently. The flowers come and they scent the air. Then they are swept aside, but, as it were by a magic wand, he bids them return, and Nature is ever renewing the wealth of her beauty. Thank God for all these gifts.

If you understand the poor you will know how much they value and how gladly they will receive a little present, be it ever so small, if given to them simply and by yourself. They will love you in return. Just in the same way all God's gifts are given to us by himself. Even sickness is a gift, because it acts as a warning. If we were all carried off suddenly and with no preparation, we should have more reason to com-

plain. If trouble never came we should be likely to love God's things more than God. He chooses our fate for us and gives us what is best for us—long life or short life, sickness or health. Whatever may come, let us say equally: "His praise shall always be in my mouth." He is so good! All that is not God himself is of God's making, and you can choose freely from amongst his gifts. He never forces us. He is working in Nature all the time, and if he ceased to keep us and all his Creation supplied with life for a single moment, everything would cease to be and would relapse into nothingness.

There is nothing north, south, east, or west in which God is not. When you sin you do it in the presence of God. Don't imagine that the darkness can cover you; it does nothing of the sort. What a reason for reverence of God and reverence in the Blessed Sacrament! In all things and everywhere God is always present. His sun never sets. His beams of light and love are always shining. He is ever present in his Church, which is living by his Spirit; and not only is he present, but he is *at work* in it. There is nothing you can do without his co-operation, and it is the same throughout all Creation. How wonderful it is that all the power of God's Majesty should be employed in serving you! What will you do for him? How will you show your gratitude and serve him? How can you help praising all God's beauties? Yet we do not think often enough of these simple things.

Give God your prayers morning and evening. It is not much to ask of you, yet the world thinks it unnecessary.

Praising God is the most noble of employments.

Instead of praise and reverence for God's goodness, we simply take all we want as a matter of course. That is not the right way. Whilst God is serving us so magnificently, where is our right place?

S Francis Xavier was so overcome at the thought of our Lord washing the feet of his disciples that he exclaimed : "Where can I find a place *at all*?"

Minister to our Lord's feet. The poor are his feet. Minister to them. Has he not said : "What you did to one of these my least brethren, you did it unto me"? Lift up your hearts! You have one Master, and him only shall you serve.

SEVENTH DAY : IV

The Jewish religion was established by God as a preparation for the Christian religion which was to follow. Our Lord, during his life on earth, did not despise the Jewish religion. On the contrary, he built up his own Church upon the ancient foundation. The central point of both religions established by God—viz., the Jewish and the Christian—was the offering of a sacrifice as an act by which something is offered to God. This was the main feature of the Jewish religion. In offering himself both as priest and victim on the cross, our Lord sums up the sacrifice and the priesthood. The complete satisfaction which he then made is the sum total of all religion. Our Lord has established the sacrifice of the Blessed Sacrament in the Mass. He has left it with us as the central feature of Christianity. He offered himself as a sacrifice once and for all, and in the Blessed Sacrament on our altars our Lord puts himself into a sacrificial state under the appearance of bread and wine. The two consecrations

represent our Lord's death on the cross. The sacrifice of the Mass is being constantly offered somewhere at every hour of the day and night. From it we derive our energy and all that vital power which gives life to the soul. The two religions which we have direct from God, and which he has given us, both contain a sacrifice. That is why the sacrifice of the Mass can never be torn out of the Church. Men have hated it and persecuted it, but it has survived all attacks. It has been driven into the catacombs. Priests in England have been forced to take refuge in priest-holes behind fireplaces in Catholic houses, to enable them to say Mass. Landowners have, like the priests themselves, been executed with the grossest cruelty, simply from the fact that Mass had been said in their houses, even if they themselves were not present. It had been made high treason for a priest to set foot on English soil. Yet in spite of the cruellest persecutions the Mass has remained. You cannot stop it. The Mass brings the channels of grace to us. It is the Fountain of Life, and without it we starve.

Love the Mass. Unite yourself with it wherever it is said. Live on it. Get strength from it and feed on it daily, as your daily bread for which you pray in the Lord's Prayer.

The priest offers it for *all* present. It is the life by which we live, and he who takes part in it goes forth strong as a lion. The best way to bring England back to the Faith and to make her again, as she once was, "Merrie England," is by living the true Catholic life for God.

You have got the *best*. See that you live by it worthily.

NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT THE
CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART,
ROEHAMPTON
(SEPTEMBER 9-15, 1911)

FIRST DAY

I HAVE put off my start for my coming visit to America in order to give you this Retreat. I hope it will be for all your good, and that you will help me to make it so. We can all do more—*with help*. I want you to realize your mission in life, and to create in you a “want for God.” That is what the world needs to-day, and when we have realized this want let us pass it on to others, so that the world may have been improved through us. We want God because only God can satisfy us. S Augustine said the soul can never be satisfied till it rests in God. What have I in heaven but him?

Make God the God of our hearts, and that will keep out other gods. The gods of the world and of sin will find no place within us. This is what God made us for. He created us out of nothing. He was once alone—the great Triune God, the sum of all Perfection. Why did he create the world? It was love, for love always wants to give, like the sun, which gives glory after glory, painting the landscape, giving itself in the colours of the rose and the lily and in the glory of the golden corn, warming us by its hidden power taken centuries after from the bowels of the earth. Artists

need materials for their work, and they need the correct frame of mind; without these they do not succeed. But God needs none of these things, and he made us all out of nothing. If he made us, then we belong to him, and all we have is his, too. Authors and artists look upon their works as their own, to do with what they like. So we belong to God entirely and inalienably, and he can do with us and with all we have as he wills. We must realize this thoroughly and face the truth of it. God is our Master, our Creator, our Supreme Lord, and it follows that we belong to him entirely and that we depend upon him absolutely. His call comes when he likes, and we must live our lives for him—lie, as it were, in the hollow of his hand—till the summons comes to be carried away to his kingdom. So keep right with God. Try to create in the soul a want for God even as the “hart panteth after the fountains of water.” Let us try to please him, to get nearer to him, and to have a longing to possess him when time shall have passed into eternity. This is what the heart is made for—*i.e.*, the love of God.

SECOND DAY: I

Yesterday I put two dominant thoughts before you, viz.:

1. I belong to God entirely and inalienably.
2. I depend upon God completely and absolutely.

If we carry these two thoughts with us, how greatly they should influence our lives. We are so apt to forget that we are God’s creatures—*i.e.*, belonging to and depending upon him. Retreats help to bring us back to our right position. If God forgot us for a moment we

should slip out of existence into the nothingness from which we came. Think of the nobility of belonging to God! What a comfort it should be to us to know that we are held in God's Hand. "He knoweth our frame and remembereth we are dust." He never forgets us. If we look back on ten years only of our past life, do we not see how he has cared for us and guarded us? We owe to him, in return, love, respect, and gratitude. We should praise him for all he has given us. Life is like a three-volume novel; then comes "Finis." For some of us the end may not be far off! Let us prepare for death, and be ready for it when it comes. Life is uncertain, though many live as though they could be sure of its continuance. Try to create in your souls a want for God. As our Lord said to his disciples before the Last Supper, "Prepare a room," so that we may be ready when he comes.

Praise God, by your manner of living, by being a good advertisement for his religion. Not by aiming at heights of spirituality, which too often come down with a crash, but by facing the difficulties of life bravely as one ascending a mountain step by step and always tied fast to your guide. *Reverence* God by putting him first in everything and be so self-held and controlled that if God came he would find you ready no matter what you were engaged in at the moment. Never do anything which you could not *go on* doing if God came. *Serve* God. Some persons object that S Ignatius did not say "love" instead of "serve" God, but S Ignatius knew that love is service. If you love a person you like to give to him. Love is giving and serving; therefore it was not necessary to insist on love also.

S Augustine said 1,500 years ago: "Use creatures with the moderation of an employer, and not with the ardour of a lover"—*i.e.*, use creatures as a means to an end, and if they are hurtful, drop them, as one drops anything that is hot. We have all of us something to drop and something to take up for God. It should not be too difficult for us to do this, and we should willingly give up anything that God asks of us, if we once realized how completely we are his. God will not be satisfied with a second place. The First Commandment tells us this. He wants "our whole heart," and we must use the creatures he gives us as a means to this end—*i.e.*, time, talents, money, inspirations, grace of God, prayer, sermons—all for God. The longer one lives the more one feels how God alone satisfies. We tire of all else—the sun, the shade, music, friends—we can have too much of any of these. God alone is our strength for ever, till we meet him at the golden gates.

SECOND DAY: II

I want you now to consider what it is to be a Catholic. We know now what it is to be a creature; we are born a creature, not a child of God. We become children of God by baptism. That is why it is so entrancing to be amongst Catholic children fresh from their baptism, and before they have lost this divine grace by sin. It is always well to be kind to children. They are like our Lord in the Tabernacle, so dependent upon us.

The Church teaches us that in baptism a child is converted into a child of God and adopted into his

family and made a partaker of his divinity, giving it a right to the kingdom of heaven, as an heir of God, and a co-heir with Christ. Baptism is, as it were, a bath of gold, giving to the child such wealth of graces that human understanding fails to appreciate them. It gives to us all sacramental grace, special grace for special emergencies, and helps in trouble. It spiritualizes our material acts, and enables us to rise again after falls, however serious, as the sun shines again after the darkness of night.

Before God, the *Grace of God* is all that matters. Social distinctions are trivial and of no account. We need a right sense of proportion in this respect. As Catholics, we receive divine life from God. We have from him human and divine life, and the human side must not be given too great importance. For our divine life, God, in his infinite goodness, gives us divine food. Come every day. Be strong in it, for it will last in heaven. Our Lord comes here on purpose to feed our divine life. The one life we have to live is the divine life of grace.

SECOND DAY: III

We have now realized our position as "creatures" and "children" of God, and we have still got to know ourselves as his "servants." As such we have to keep our place. God makes no distinctions, and all alike are made to serve him, and all alike, when he rings us up, will have to answer the bell. Nothing can keep us back. Till then we must do our work, each attending to his own share, whatever it may be, proud that we are able to call ourselves the servants of God.

Sin is treason against God. It is being "on strike."

The twentieth century tries to teach that sin does not really exist, and that it is only an invention of the priesthood to frighten people with.

People teach that life was made for pleasure, and that everything is allowable to attain this end.

But we know better. We know that if we overdo the body or overtax the brain, we feel the consequences and suffer for it. In like manner, if we have committed sins of unkindness through jealousy, or of falsehood to the injury of another, etc., we feel a remorse which tells us we have sinned. We can't get it out of our heart. Some people try to drown it with pleasure, and then they can't bear to be alone. It is sin which causes this misery of remorse. Sin means doing something against God knowingly and intentionally, and it becomes a tyranny because through giving way to it we lose our will-power to resist.

People sometimes tell me that they can't feel sorrow for sin. Let such look back on their lives, think what they were as children, and then as young men or women, and see how they misspent their time in spite of all their blessings. Let them say the fiftieth Psalm, the *Miserere*, and judge by it what their life has been.

Ask yourself, what have you done for God, to whom you belong, and on whom you depend? How have you employed the talents and the opportunities he has given you? God does not punish now, but when he rings us up we shall know.

If sin is thwarting God, it is time to hate sin, and if you still feel no sorrow for it, go to the crucifix and see what *it* says to you!

SECOND DAY: IV

Let us think to-night about Death. To die is to take a long farewell of all here, to leave everything and to go forth, as you came in, with nothing. Death the inexorable! You remember Watts' picture of Love trying to keep Death out! As well might you try to stop an express train with your left hand! Death tears us away from this world, and the soul out of the body. We ourselves don't really die; we part with the body and leave it behind, but we go on. When stripped of everything earthly, the soul will begin to live a life either of torture or of delight. The soul can never die. It passes from here to the presence of God, and to judgement before our Lord.

If we have made efforts and struggles in life and have declared ourselves on God's side, God will reward us, and we shall hear the words "Well done!"—which, as his faithful servants, we shall have deserved. Live for that. It is worth everything. We mustn't allow ourselves to be failures before God, though in the sight of men we may have been so.

Look death in the face. Accept it as a punishment due to our sins and also as the only means of going to God. Welcome death, and live so as to pass, when death comes, into the happy place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, to find peace and rest in the arms of God for ever.

Live, and die, so as to hear the words "Well done!"

THIRD DAY: I

Hell is a subject which we do not care to think about. We prefer to put it aside; and yet it is well to turn our thoughts to it in order to stiffen us to go straight through the many temptations of the present day. The love of God may fail to hold us, and then the fear of the Lord and of his judgements will help us. So let us look calmly into that bottomless pit of which our Lord tells us in the story of Dives and Lazarus. Here we have his own teaching of God's justice. It may have been only a parable, but, be that as it may, the story was meant to convey a truth about God's justice. Dives, we learn, gratified his human nature by his apparel and his fare every day. We know nothing more beyond these facts, and that the poor man lying at his gate got nothing. It was self-indulgence which was Dives' ruin; by self-indulgence and self-gratification we, too, may spoil our characters, and in the end shall fail to be able to resist temptation at all. Anyone living for himself and for pleasure is qualifying for hell. To reach to heaven we have to be self-denying and self-sacrificing. There are many things in which we have to deny ourselves. There are books we must not read, songs we must not sing, plays we must not see, company we must not keep—things forbidden to the eyes, the lips, the ears, the tongue. All these things demand from us self-denial, and we have to fight down the things which would drag us to hell.

Lazarus, lying there in his poverty, saw all the wealth which surrounded Dives, but he did not resent it. He was content to look forward and to await God's good time, and one day the angels came and carried

him to heaven. His soul "went on," as we were seeing yesterday, for when this vesture of clay slips off, the soul wings its flight to God. The time here then seems very short; it is all over, and the soul is with God.

Dives, too, slips through, and our Lord says, "He was buried in hell," and from there he begged Lazarus to bring him but one drop of water to cool his burning tongue. What a change for him! From the sumptuous fare to which he had been used every day he now begs for a single drop of water! We do not know what the fires of hell may be, but our Lord speaks of it as "flames," corresponding to our idea of fire, and we must, as Catholics, accept his teaching and go by what he says, both as to heaven and hell. Lazarus replied to Dives that he could not come to him because there was a chasm fixed between them, and by this we learn that it is useless for us to comfort ourselves, as some do, with the idea that if there is a hell we shall be able to pass back to heaven from it. The teaching about hell is a difficulty, but we believe it because our Lord has said it. We have no guarantee that we, too, like Dives, may not go there. His was a self-centred, luxuriant life, and it was, in consequence, a life of omission. We do not hear of any good thing he ever did, and we may feel sure he never did any, or our Lord would have been certain to mention it. We, too, in spite of our glorious destiny as children of God and co-heirs with Christ, and in spite of our divine inheritance, if we live for ourselves and for pleasure, if we refuse to take up our cross and to carry out our mission here, shall slip into hell as Dives did. Let us live as children of God; let us fight and be on God's side, and we may be sure that if we do this and

are sorry for our sins we are making progress towards heaven. Self-indulgence and worldly success are not good enough.

In these days Catholics are in danger of losing the faith in these things. Remember that it was to save us from hell that our Lord died on the cross. Why should he have come down from heaven and lived and died here for us if there is no hell to save us from? The cross is the best proof of hell, where we see our Lord dying in torture and agony. Let these thoughts influence us when we are tempted to sin, so that we may so live our lives that, when we pass away, we may go, not down, but up into the everlasting glory of heaven.

THIRD DAY: II

Prayer is our audience-time with the King of Heaven. In sermons and spiritual readings he speaks to us, and in prayer we speak to him. The object of prayer is, as regards ourselves, to get strength to do and to bear his blessed will. Any prayer from which you rise with a firmer purpose to do and to bear the will of God is prayer well done. But in order to pray well we have to kneel and struggle, because good prayer means a great effort. It calls forth all the faculties of the soul and the senses of the body. The harmony of prayer needs so much; all the stops have to be pulled out. We have to keep our attention, to put aside distractions, to be patient with self; we need faith when we seem to be making no way. Like a Channel swimmer holding his own when he is making no progress, so have we to struggle to hold our own before we can reach the Throne of God. We need

Hope, Charity, and Love in prayer. So often the heart seems dry; there is no cultivation in its garden; it is barren and pathless. Then, we do not give time enough to prayer. We are inclined to put it off, or we are tired or in trouble and feel it's no good trying; we don't get what we want, and prayer seems a failure. Yet to give up prayer is to give up spiritual life. It is the nourishment and strength of the soul, and we might as well try to live without food for the body as without the food of prayer for the soul. Not to pray means to fade and droop and die. No one has ever given up religion without first giving up prayer. Pray always, because life is not a psalm, but a prayer. The need is clear, for there can be no sanctity without it. The want of prayer is the root of all failure in spiritual life. In the measure in which we are spiritual we are prayerful. No one can be so old or so young, or so weak or so strong, but needs to pray, and you and I must be given to prayer.

Let us have fixed times for prayer, not by fits and starts, and let it not be given a starving diet. How often do you feed your body? Do not do less for your soul.

Do not pray "because you feel inclined," but because it is the fixed time. Give the time to God if only by taking a "sun-bath" before the Blessed Sacrament. We can always do this, or sit down with a crucifix in our hands, even if we are too tired or worried to pray with full force, and we shall have done well. You will have learnt the big virtues of humility, patience, fortitude, and will be stronger for doing God's will. Do not cheat him of his time in your prayers. They will be successful in the measure

in which you struggle, and you will have done much in giving your *time*; and if you give your time to God, he will give you eternity in reward.

THIRD DAY: III

THE STORY OF MAGDALEN

She was a beautiful girl, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, married to an officer, who had left her. Then she married again, and, going from bad to worse, came entirely to grief, so that the words of the gospel describe her as "the woman who was a sinner." Beautiful things should have the effect of lifting our hearts up. God's beautiful gifts of flowers, scenery, etc., should remind us of God, and we should praise him for them. "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord!" But too often beauties have the effect of bringing us down instead of up, as in the case of the Magdalen. The Evangelist writes so kindly he does not mention her name, nor does our Lord until after his Resurrection, when she was purified and made holy. Then he named her "Mary." Our Lord was preaching on the text "Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." He had a great reputation as a preacher, but his words were a revelation to Magdalen. Sin had brought her no happiness. It never does. She was feeling only misery and remorse, and here was One offering that she should come to him and be at rest! She saw and heard him and was spellbound, and, pondering over his words, she determined to try him. At the great banquet given by Simon she came in, and, passing up to him, sank at

his feet, bathing them with her tears. Thus her sins were poured out before him who had said, "Come to me," and so the stain of them was washed out by her tears. Then she pours the precious nard on to his feet, those feet which had brought the "Gospel of Peace." The company watch in surprise. The master of the feast is shocked, whilst our Lord sees and gains the sinner. So he turns to Simon and points out that he had provided no water, no towel, no kiss, and adds, that wherever his name should be mentioned, hers, too, should be known. Her many sins had been forgiven because she loved much. Magdalen heard, and felt her heart changed, and she consecrated herself at his feet. She has been called the Apostle of our Lord's Feet, for after this she was always there. She leaves Simon's house and goes home alone, and there makes her act of contrition. No temptations could affect her again. At our Lord's death and at his resurrection she was at his feet again, and in heaven she will be there still.

In this interview at Simon's house Magdalen never said a word. How wonderfully comforting this is! He looks at the heart. He knows. How beautiful that he should not require her to confess all she had done wrong! How gracious and kind! And then he never refers to it again.

Some people can never forgive and forget. They keep on nagging and bringing things up again and again. They do it to annoy. When a thing is forgiven, never mention it again.

Our Lord is so dear and so generous and noble and precious, so loyal and so magnanimous. You feel that a mountain of sin repented of is treated as though

it were no more than a speck of dust and swept away.

Who can refuse to love him? Alas! he is often the last to be thought about, and it is only when the world fails us that we turn to him.

“Jesu, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast.”

THIRD DAY: IV

The Annunciation is the central mystery of the Incarnation.

In the highlands of Galilee the little village of Nazareth is set in a belt of woods. Here it was that Joseph the Carpenter carried on his trade, and there was Mary, his espoused wife. There was nothing noticeable about her except her innocent beauty and her simplicity. But the eye of God rested upon her as the one whom he had selected to be the Mother from whom his Son was to take his human nature. So the angel comes and salutes her as “full of grace.” Her answer shows her perfect sanctity: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*. There is no false humility in what she says, no complaining. She knew she was God’s, and so she accepted his will without question. *Fiat!*

Her hymn, the *Magnificat*, shows the joy which filled her heart later. The heart expands in joy as it shrinks in sorrow. Some people say that the Catholic religion is “emotional.” Of course it is, because it appeals to our whole being and brings forth every perfection and sanctifies every sense. Mary alone of all God’s creatures has reached to perfection, yet three hundred years ago she was turned out, and a religion

without ideals and without its Queen came in. The thought of Mary and of the place God has given her is a stupendous one. Let us try to get hold of these mysteries by meditating upon them.

FOURTH DAY : I

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AT BETHLEHEM

About an hour's distance from Jerusalem is Bethlehem, "the House of Bread," for there the Bread of Heaven came on earth and our Lord was born. The shepherds who were out that night watching their flocks were surprised at what they saw.

How surprises come to us, and how they test us! Sometimes they come with his cross to bear, sometimes with his rewards to console us. That night the shepherds suddenly saw great lights and they heard music in the skies, for the voices of angels were singing *Gloria in excelsis Deo* in a way that was never done before nor since. This music and this song was sung over the crib of the newly born Divine Child by processions of angels straight from the golden gates of heaven, and the echo was taken up on earth and has never ceased.

What a grand set-off to the *Miserere* is the *Gloria*. As in a Gothic Church the arches all point upwards, so in a basilica, such as S Peter's at Rome, the *Gloria* seems more fitting than the *Miserere*.

The shepherds were afraid—and no wonder. When we get near God we seem to be almost overwhelmed, and the touch of the spiritual life helps to make us take straight steps towards the open door beyond the stars. To the shepherds it seemed almost more than

they could bear when they beheld the angels of God, straight from the presence of God, hovering about the crib of straw, adoring the Divine Child. They sought him out and were his first courtiers, these plain working men belonging to the class amongst whom he afterwards lived and moved. They found the Child, with Joseph and with Mary his Mother. This was the “entourage” of his own choosing.

God, whom the heavens cannot contain, is there in a crib, in loneliness and in poverty, beginning his course from the crib to the cross—a fitting start for such a finish. Look at what his dwelling-place was, and look at ours. What does our house matter, or our pretty possessions and ornaments. Our Lord had none of these, and Mary was happier than any empress because in him she had all she needed, and the more she loved him, the more she was loving her God. Remember, it is not what we have, but what we give up for God, that makes us happy. We should be ready to give up things before they drag us down and before death snatches them from us. He is happiest who has given them up entirely in order to possess God entirely.

What have I in heaven but thee, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? *Venite adoremus!*

Ask Mary to place him in your arms, and then tell him the story of your love. Think if you can do anything to prove your love. Can you not give up something or make some sacrifice to lay at his feet? He is your God. It is the heart he wants. It is vain to bring your wealth or your music and song unless you bring it *with your love*, for he will not want it. But a wealth of love in the poverty of poor surroundings he will accept. The poor are his friends, whilst

the world ignores him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. And the world knew him not."

Let us look at Bethlehem and learn there what life really is. Why did he come in poverty like this? Was it not so that *none* need fear to come to him? Poor little barefooted children love him now and bring their little tokens to him in his crib at Christmas, as they would not have dared to do if he had come in grandeur and state.

Love is what he most wants from us all, our love and our devotion.

Venite adoremus Dominum!

FOURTH DAY: II

With time we purchase eternity. Do not let us waste time. Much is wasted by men, but even more by women. It is well to have *l'ordre du jour*—i.e., a scheme of life. Without this it is impossible to grow character. We have to try and get to heaven along the road on which God has put us, and that means advancing, often with trouble and difficulty, but with order and method. Let us give the example in our own households and put our lives into reasonable order. Let us get up at a fixed time. Let us say fixed prayers at a fixed time. Then as to hearing Mass. As far as you can, go regularly. If you cannot go early, go late. There is no difficulty in finding an eleven o'clock Mass. There is one at Farm Street.

Have method in your everyday life. As far as possible, have your fixed days for shopping and visiting and for being at home. Do not leave your occupations

to chance, nor waste time on useless frivolities. Much time is lost on light reading. Don't be slaves to the newspapers and to novels. These things make life useless. Much time is wasted in useless talk. Incessant talk is bad. Don't talk merely for the sake of talking. Get your lives into order; read what is helpful, sensible, and improving. Women can spend time profitably in working for God's churches, or for the poor, or for friends, or for bazaars. Give God something, and he will multiply it to you, even as in the miracles of the five loaves and two fishes.

Be careful as to your writing. Do not write on impulse, and never write an angry letter at night. Have method in your correspondence, and keep your answered and unanswered letters apart. Know what you want when you go shopping. Have method even at meals. Put the life of both body and soul into order. Conversation is often very unedifying. Even "pious" people are often a scandal, talking against everyone but themselves. Do not be like them. Hold your peace, and don't talk about others.

Get all the good you can out of your spiritual life. No sermon was ever preached from which no good could be got, because the Word of God always appeals where there is soil in which it can take root. We can always learn something and find something fresh in the Gospel every time, as in a kaleidoscope you see fresh beauties by shaking it. The Jesuit Vicar-General Bex, who had been preaching before the Court at Vienna, was walking home afterwards and was given a lift by a member of the congregation, who said how wonderfully useful the sermon had been to him. On inquiry he admitted that it was the sign of the cross

after the sermon, which had spoken to him of the death and Passion of our Lord and of their benefits to us, in a way which had never struck him before. So numerous and unexpected are the different ways in which our minds may be affected by what the ear hears, and the eye sees.

“To follow a strict rule of life” is often very trying. S John Berchmans, S.J., used to say that it was the “greatest mortification.” Yet we shall form character by doing something every day, bringing discipline to the heart, mind, and will.

FOURTH DAY: III

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF OUR LORD AT NAZARETH

Think of that obscure little village, a dull little place with nothing interesting in it, and of which it was said: “Can any thing good come from Nazareth?” There our Lord was content to spend thirty out of his thirty-three years of life. Our Lord chose it, and from there the whole world has been lit up. He spent his childhood and youth simply and quietly, like any other child or youth, working and praying, and “he hath done all things well.”

We do not know that he ever worked a miracle at home, and there he lived unknown, in spite of all the infinite powers which were in his hands. It is indeed a mystery of mysteries, and consoling for those many amongst us who feel they have talents and powers which their position and opportunities give them no chance of turning to account. We find such among all classes. It seems that, if given a chance, such splendid work could have been done which was never

done. We learn from our Lord that he went through a similar experience. He could have done what he liked during those thirty years, but he did nothing—nothing except things pleasing to his Father, by doing and hearing his will always and everywhere. No doubt he might often have liked to work a miracle to please or help or protect his Mother when she was exposed to the pinches of poverty or of sun, wind, or storm, and yet he did nothing!

Nazareth teaches us that we can “do well” wherever God has put us. Our Lord’s long period of waiting is imitated by S Ignatius in giving his Jesuits such a long time of preparation—sixteen or seventeen years, and then another year as novices, in case anything should have been forgotten, before they are allowed to begin work, all the better for the many years of training, in which they have learnt experience, to know how to deal with people and cases. The hidden life at Nazareth explains to us older ones why God has not called upon us to do any great work in his service. In the spiritual life it is really not necessary to do much work. Our Lady, in spite of her infinite graces, did nothing special that we know of, and we can do as she did, by staying at home, and being kind and considerate, gentle, simple, straight, patient, and not jealous of others. There is sanctity in being always cheerful, whether working or praying, and we can all do that.

Life means doing and bearing the will of God and waiting till he calls us up, ever doing our best to please him in joy or sorrow always and everywhere. That is the lesson of the life at Nazareth.

After that, if God calls upon you to do any great

thing for him, he gives the grace to do it with. The true training for heaven is in the heart. "Give me thy heart." And we can gain battlefields of the heart as well in the cottage as in the palace. Perfection can be found by all alike. There is no need for fear. We have only to trust God and all the past will be blotted out if we ask him and trust him, no matter what it has been. No one can be a failure who is trying to please God, and he pays us back according to our desires and our wishes in serving him, and not according to our *success*.

The hidden life teaches us this: Make Jesus our model, praying and working and doing and bearing the will of our Father always and everywhere.

FOURTH DAY: IV

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR LORD'S ACTIVE LIFE

We see our Lord moving about always so quietly and yet so strongly and energetically, as though he were bent on a mission. We know how deeply he felt this by his words: "How am I straitened until it be accomplished?" And then he was always the same; no moods. Yes, he was the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow.

See how he deals with people. See with Nicodemus, how patient with the material, useless question which he put. This is a great lesson, especially for us Catholics, who are so constantly exposed to be questioned about our religion, and often only with the view of catching us out and misrepresenting us. These are opportunities for patience and for the practice of our faith. With

the Woman of Samaria see how gentle and patient he is, and how he wins her confession of her sinful past almost without her knowing it. He had come to "save the lost." She had had a bad time in spite of her worldly life, and our Lord knew and understood. How gently and delicately he dealt with her. He did not even refer to it first. He got *her* to do it.

Let us copy his example there. Let us not speak so much of the faults of others and talk scandal, but be kind in what we say of others, and never gossip.

Then see how he treats Judas, who had been his chosen friend and companion. He doesn't turn from him when he well knew the dishonesty of his management of "the bag." He does not refer to it nor tell the others, but is patient and silent about it, and tries even to win him back when he is being betrayed with a kiss. He acted in the same spirit all through, and then, in the end, not one single person had the pluck to say a word for him. Take this thought and learn from it not to be influenced in life by the gratitude or the ingratitude of friends. Determine always to do your best in spite of everything. A Jesuit Father working in Borneo was asked what results he had. His answer was: "None, but I've done my best and have got some children. I can't do more, but must leave it with God." So let us do things because they are right, for God. That is what matters. Not what the world thinks. Work like that. It is easy enough to be nice with those we like, but that is not enough. Learn to act for God and for nothing else. Do all for him.
Propter te.

If there are no results, never mind; go on all the same. After all, our Lord's life looked a great failure,

yet he never left off because no results came. Look and see if your life is inspired by motives of working for our Master. He said: "I am thy reward exceeding great."

FIFTH DAY: I

OUR LORD IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANI

Try to keep your minds always in an attitude of realizing the Passion of our dear Lord. Pray much for grace to appreciate and to understand it. There is no sanctity without plunging into the Sacred Wounds, so that the Passion of Christ may give us strength to resist evil and to do and to bear God's will, no matter what befalls us. Consider the depth, and the width, and the height, and the breadth of his love for us in his sufferings, and then let us measure our own little sufferings by his. He bore great things for us (*Majora sustinuit*). At the Garden of Gethsemani—*i.e.*, of the wine-presser—he left eight of his disciples at the gate, telling them to pray. No doubt they felt it hard that they were not allowed to go with him farther. We also may sometimes feel left out in the cold, and may be inclined to ask: "Why am I left out and the others chosen?" The answer is: "Be where God places you. Stay at the gate if you are told to, and pray."

To the chosen three he revealed himself, and we, too, if we are ready to suffer for him, may be near him. The three had seen him in the beauty of his Transfiguration; now they are to see him all changed, tottering, and falling in his humility.

"Fear" fell upon him. Till now he had known no fear. The threats of his enemies had never affected

him, but now, as he foresees his Passion, he is as one struck by God, suffering this for us and condescending to experience it, so that to those who should follow him he should say, "Fear not, little flock," and, "Be not afraid of them who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear. Fear ye him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, Fear him." He thinks of all those who are to come after him in his sufferings. Fisher, and More, and so many others of our martyrs here and in all other places, who gave themselves up to torture, getting *strength* from him, who, like a general leading an army, says, not "Forward," but "Follow me." He has given us courage by his example and has experienced *all* which he asks us to suffer, saying through it all: "Thy will, not mine, be done." We may ask, as our Lord did, that if it be possible the chalice of suffering may pass from us, and yet say: "Thy will be done, because I am thine and I desire to do and to bear thy will. Strengthen me to do it generously and with chivalrous instincts, to show that I am the chosen of thy Heart." Follow him, the kindest and best of friends and masters.

After "fear," "heaviness" came upon him. The light seemed gone, leaving him in the darkness of misery and wretchedness, weighed down with the load of our sins. That will show us what sin is. He had borne our iniquities and carried our griefs. He makes atonement and contrition for all the degrading sins of mankind. See how hateful sin is and how awful, and let us keep away from it. He said, "My soul is sorrowful," and an agony of blood fell from him. "I looked for one who would comfort me, and found

none." Why was this agony of blood? Because he could see those who would be lost in spite of all he was about to go through for them. So it is when we hold a mission. Thousands are left outside whom the Blood of Jesus never touches, and who are lost for ever. *Quae utilitas in sanguine meo?* What doth it profit to gain the whole world and lose the soul?

So in Retreats: some may yet go home with their fervour unrenewed.

At the end of the agony the three disciples saw a sight never before seen, for an angel brought a chalice, and our Lord drains it to the dregs. *Passio Christi, conforta me.* Then he goes forth, strengthened, to meet his enemies, stronger than ever to do and to bear the will of God and to teach us to say: "The things that are pleasing to the Master I will do." Rise, like him, to lift up, and carry, and die upon your cross. Never get far from the picture of the Passion. Unite your contrition with his great Act of Contrition in the Garden, and in confession kneel beside him there, asking him to wash away in his precious Blood all iniquities from your soul.

FIFTH DAY: II

ON PAIN AND THE VALUE OF SUFFERING

The most precious possession and the deepest in our nature is suffering. Its measure is the measure of sanctity. We cannot grow a fine character without it. Pain is a relic of the true cross.

We need pain to train our wills. If everything always went well and easily, if we could think and say and do just what we pleased, we should form no

character and get no will-power, as an unused limb which loses all strength from want of practice. Pain and self-denial brace the will, and by suffering we learn self-control. It helps to train us and to make us perfect women, and we must train ourselves because we belong to the religion of the Crucified, and he says : " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Deny yourself in things that are lawful, so that you may have strength to resist the unlawful. Be careful in what you read and in what you say. Shirk unedifying subjects or speaking against other people. " Take heed to thyself and to doctrines " is a good precept. So in plays and other amusements. Tear out anything that offends God. Thus you will get will-power and be able to say " No."

Is there not a great deal in your past which demands reparation? See what uses you have made of God's blessings. Bear what you don't like as an atonement and to repair the past. Take pain in the spirit of contrition, as you ought to take the small penance given you in confession. Realize that pain is good for the soul.

We like to resemble those whom we love, and we should be ready to accept just a few drops from our Lord's chalice of pain and resemble him till his likeness is burnt into us by pain.

Sanctity is impossible without pain. It brings God nearer to us. We have nearly all of us something to bear at some time of our lives, and tragic things happen to others which we know nothing of.

Think how our Lord was treated and how he was forsaken by all his friends. We are not likely to be treated so badly as that. Earth is a novitiate for heaven.

It is the drill-ground and the schoolroom, and when the going home day comes there will be no pangs in the eternal holiday. Study our Lord and his cross, and appreciate the value of pain as a relic of the cross.

FIFTH DAY : III

In studying our Lord's Passion, remember that he loved you and gave himself for you each as though you had been the only one, and the measure of his suffering was the measure of his love for you.

After his prayer of agony in the Garden, he rose, strengthened, to take up his cross and to die on it. He never looked back, and he never again prayed, "If it be possible," for strength had been won. The object of prayer is to get strength. Prayer does not mean feeling pious. It means an effort, perhaps even an agony to draw tears. What effort and what struggle our Lord's prayer had been when he rose from it, strong, to face his Passion ! Prayer is the biggest work we have to do. Pray so as to get strength to meet your difficulties and to shake off whatever may be wrong in you.

It is glorious to see our Lord after his prayer, how he goes forth with the majesty of a strong purpose. Force your soul to follow his example.

His captors dragged him before Annas, who asked him about his disciples, but he answered nothing. Why was this? It was because he could say nothing good of them. They had all proved unfaithful. Every one had fled. Learn from this beautiful example not to say *anything* of others if you cannot say anything *good*. Let not the tongue upon which our Lord rests in Holy Communion speak ill of your neighbour. This will

mean self-conquest; it will mean a sacrifice for God of your feelings and inclinations, and you will be thought dull and uninteresting perhaps, but you will be learning to become like our Lord. Then Annas asked him about his doctrine, and he answered that he had always spoken in public. Let Annas ask those who had heard him. We have a practical lesson here, for people speak so differently before our face to what they do when our backs are turned; but our Lord's teaching had never altered to suit different occasions. Our Lord bears all these things to teach us. Then, before Caiphas false witnesses are called, and this misrepresentation must have hurt him even more than the physical pain he endured. Misrepresentation is so hard to bear, and it is done every day now as regards his Church. Caiphas asks our Lord whether he is the Son of God, and called his reply "blasphemy." He didn't stop to test or try the case. No, he finds our Lord guilty on the spot, and agrees that he is guilty of death. Then our Lord is left all through that terrible night with the soldiers, who ill-treat him, make sport of him, and mock him.

How do we bear a little misrepresentation? The wonder is that we are so much upset by it when we so readily speak ill of others.

Try from our Lord's Passion to get into your life the lessons which it teaches. Get to know and to follow and to imitate him better. Live your life so as to get more Christlike in thought and action and character. Study his Passion, and you will get strength to follow him upwards, carrying your cross.

Passio Christi, conforta me!

FIFTH DAY: IV

Picture to yourself that first Good Friday morning when our Lord is brought before Pilate. Three charges are made against him:

First, that he had gone about perverting the people.
Second, that he had forbidden tribute to be paid to Cæsar.

Third, that he wanted to be King of the Jews.

He had done none of these things, but, if he had, the people would have risen in support of him to a man! It was just because he was not political that the people brought these charges. Pilate was a man of expedience, a politician, trying to "keep in" all round, or he would have dismissed the case, for he had to admit that he found no fault in him.

"*Therefore,*" he said, "I will chastise him and let him go!" What injustice! Realize what it must have been to our Lord to be the toy of such people!

And is not that the way in which we treat him still? We are bound to him, as his creatures and his children, and yet we repeat the scourgings by our sins, and we "let him go," we cast him off, and think no more about him! See what sin did to our Lord. Do not think of the Passion as something which happened 2,000 years ago, but try to see and to realize your own share in it. S Paul says we crucify our Lord afresh by sin. Think how he loved us and gave himself for us, and *this* is the return we give him, when he is pleading for love from our hearts. Get courage to be on his side, give up your self-indulgence, deny yourself something, and come and see him stripped of everything, his friends and even his flesh, and learn there what sin

is. Try to repair the past by love and by loyalty. Try to please him in every event of your life. Make great acts of contrition with a firm purpose for the time which yet remains to you here.

SIXTH DAY: I

OUR LORD'S TRIAL BEFORE HEROD

Herod was a typical worldling, keeping up his little empty court, and living in sin with his brother's wife. He had been anxious to see S John the Baptist, who came and preached before him on the text : " It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife," and the day had come when Herod had consented to murder him in revenge. Our Lord knew all this, and Pilate sends him before Herod. Herod hoped to see a miracle, and questioned him with many words. Our Lord stands before him, his hands tied behind his back, his head bowed, silent, in prayer. If he had studied the world he could have received the favours of the world, but we cannot serve God and mammon, and Jesus was silent (*Jesus autem tacebat*). So, as Herod could get nothing out of him, he sent him back to Pilate after laughing him to scorn, and putting on him fool's garments.

We learn from this interview :

First: That Herod was all for show and for worldliness. Christ was all simplicity. Herod talked much. Our Lord was silent. Herod finally treated our Lord as if he were wanting in mind. Christ gave no sign at all.

Here is the key to so much that we do not understand, and that is mysterious in life. Why he lets his

Church be treated as she is. Papers are full of articles against the practice and the teaching of his Church, and the same false misrepresentations are made again and again. Don't mind it, go on sowing the seed, and do not, except in exceptional cases, waste time in giving answers where none are wanted. The life you lead is the best explanation you can give of your Church, and you can defend her cause more by good actions and a good life than by talking about it. Do not be influenced by worldly surroundings or by smart clothes and smart appointments. If you should find yourself in such environments, look out for opportunities of doing good there, quietly. Do something for God, simply and calmly. These are "spiritual industries," by which you can carry your religion into every moment of your life. Your religion must not be limited to Sundays, though on those days you get the opportunity for more help. There are so many ways in which you can work for God.

When you are shopping, you can say a kind word to the tired girl at the counter. You can be kind and gentle to the servant girl, and if you find she is stupid, that is all the more reason to be patient. Let us be patient with other people, as our Lord is patient with us. Leaving worldlings alone, as our Lord left Herod, let us let in sunshine wherever we can, and God will love you for it. Give consolation and you will get consolation from God. Study your life, and give our Lord reason to be kind to you. Put yourself out to be kind and our Lord will be pleased with you for it and will reward you. There is many a heart eating itself out for sympathy, which would cost you nothing! A kind word, or a smile, or a sixpence will often help a person

in trouble through a difficulty if you would only give it. Try to make use of your life in these ways.

To Herod, living an impure life, our Lord had nothing to say. His worldly court was nothing to him. All worldly things are of no account before God. *He* is in everything, and is everywhere. What more do we want? Herod's fall had not been the worst part. To remain in sin is the worst part of a fall. Pick yourself up as fast as you can. Make your act of contrition and fly to ask for forgiveness. *Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea et a peccato meo munda me. Tibi soli peccavi! Cor mundum crea in me Deus!* Hate the spirit of worldliness. That is the sin of the day. Have the spirit of the publican, not of the Pharisee, and say: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." If Herod had done this when he had the opportunity, he might have become a saint of the Passion!

Ask God in contrition and in confession to speak to you as his child. If you feel depressed about your past, or anxious about your future, just come to the feet of Christ, and ask him to do with you what he wills, and to make use of you for the good of souls. Thus you will win your way into his Sacred Heart, and you will learn to say: "What have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire on earth, thou God of my heart?"

SIXTH DAY: II

Now, in order to help us to get to heaven, we must use the sacramental graces. And first, as regards confession, I would advise you to go, as if you were kneeling at the feet of Jesus Christ and telling him your story

quite simply and as you think he would like you to tell it. He knows it all already, but he likes to hear it from you, just as a mother who knows of some naughty thing her child has done likes to get him to tell her about it and to be sorry. Then she is so glad, she is almost ready not to be sorry he did it. Our Lord is just like that. The crucifix is there, and as you kneel before it speak to him simply, like a child. Never pose in the confessional, nor try to be grand. Think of our Lord all the time, not of the priest. Be glad to get absolution, and go regularly. If you have nothing special to confess, thank God for it! and renew your sorrow for the sins of your past life.

You are not bound to go to confession unless you are in mortal sin, but go often, none the less, to get the sacramental grace. You may not like to go; it may be tiresome to await your turn. This will make it an act of humiliation and of patience, from which you receive additional grace. Venial sins are forgiven by the sacramentals, and by Holy Mass and Holy Communion. Yet, go to confession for the graces which you get there. Get to our Lord's feet. Put our Lord into everything. Never be led by any human element. If you feel this is the case, get out of it, and let Jesus Christ deal directly with your soul. Create a want for God and enlarge your heart for him. Contrition is the chief thing in confession, made from your heart, and with a strong purpose of amendment.

Then come away from confession with a feeling of joy and gladness. "Be glad in the Lord." "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" You should be ready to leap with joy to feel yourself again restored to his favour and forgiven.

Then as to Communion. Daily Communion is a splendid thing! Come with hunger for God in your soul, and make your act of thanksgiving after it. As I am often asked what thanksgiving I am in the habit of making, I will tell you, and you can either do the same or any other kind, as may suit each of you best.

First, I say nine times "Glory be to the Father," once for each of the nine choirs of angels, asking them to join their praises with mine. Then I say the *Anima Christi* carefully, with special intentions in each phrase. Then to express the feeling of my own unworthiness I say the *Miserere*, because it so well expresses what I feel. Then I say an "Our Father" to each of the five wounds. First, to the right hand for the conversion of all poor sinners; second, to the left hand, asking our Lord by his bloodshed to have mercy on all those dying to-day, and to give them a good death; third, to the right foot, thanking him and asking him to release the souls in Purgatory, and to let out one for my sake to-day; fourth, to the left foot, asking him to have pity on the Pope, the bishops, and priests, and to make them zealous in their work for him; fifth, to the Sacred Heart, thanking him for giving us the open door into it, and begging him to hide me there, with all my spiritual children.

Then I say the prayer (indulgenced), "Behold! O kind and most sweet Jesus," after that the *Magnificat*, and finally seven "Hail Marys" to S Joseph for a happy death.

So, I feed my soul!

As I leave the church I say that splendid prayer from the Mass, *Libera nos, quae sumus, Domine, ab omnibus*

malis, or the *Adoro te devote*, or *Laudate Dominum omnes Gentes*, or some other prayer.

Make a lot of our Lady! Try to make up to her for all those Protestants who know her not. She has lost so many of her children in this country. Love her rosary. You will find it an invaluable life-belt in this sea of life! It would be well to go through each of the mysteries every day. The *joyful*, for the conversion of sinners and to help them. The *sorrowful*, for the dying, especially for those who have none to pray for them, and you do not know how much your prayers may help. The *glorious*, for the souls in Purgatory. I am sure I shall get prayers in return, because there is no ingratitude in heaven. Be enthusiastic, brace yourselves, and keep up your fervour with prayer.

SIXTH DAY: III

ON THE CRUCIFIX

We must all possess one! Plant it in your being and make a great deal of it. Say to yourself that your greatest treasure on earth is your crucifix.

You know how much people value pictures or photographs of those they love. They serve to *remind*, even if they are bad ones. So we have the crucifix as a souvenir of our Lord at the supreme moment of his life, who died that we might live. We can hold it in our hand, and tell him, in childlike simplicity, of our love, because of all he has done for us, that we can never love him enough, and that we will bear anything for him, and give up anything for him. Let us pour out all our love and our veneration before the crucifix because it reminds us of him.

The crucifix will help us in pain. If we hold it in our hand and think of the pain he bore, how small ours will become in comparison. Talk to him simply and with love, bearing your cross.

Sometimes when you lie awake at night feeling restless and oppressed, and are unable to fix your mind in prayer, you can kiss the five wounds, and ask for strength, and you will gain courage.

Praise and love God. S Paul tells us that love is before everything, and that though I have the gift of prophecy and knowledge, and deliver my body to be burned, without love it profiteth nothing! God is the God of the heart, and the crucifix will teach you how to put the love of God into your life. Hold it in your hand, if you can do no more. Put him first, and you will get to love the crucifix because it reminds you of him.

Make the fire of love to burn in your hearts. Retreat helps to make up the fire and to create a love for God.

When trials come, see if you can bear them for him and say: "With thy help I *can*." Your love gives you courage, and you will become strong as a lion. Grow a strong love for God, and only God will know it. Make sacrifices for him. Your crucifix will become so dear to you that you will look upon it as the most precious possession you have. And then, when you come to be on your death-bed, it will be more to you than ever. When all else is slipping away from you, you can unite yourself with God in death. Prepare for a splendid death, in union with our Lord. He knows all, and will come and hold your hand, and he will be your friend and your brother to strengthen you. Only grow the spirit *now*, so that *then* the habit of the crucifix will

make music in your soul. So will you close your eyes in death and open them to see his *Smile*. Use all the precious things of the Church in this manner, and make use of your life so as to make it a preparation for death. Prepare for a good death.

I have seen the sad sight of the death-bed of the careless rich, with little hope in it, and I have seen the splendid death-bed of the poor old woman in the slums! Have your pet prayers and ejaculations ready by heart for your time of sickness. Have your rosary and your crucifix, and then, through your love for God, you can meet death anywhere, knowing that our Father will see you safely through. Have confidence and trust in him, and learn, from our Lord on the Cross, how to die. I can wish you nothing better than that you may all have splendid deaths, and be welcomed on the other side with the words, "Well done!"

SIXTH DAY: IV

OUR LORD'S RISEN LIFE

In the first place, we must realize how unchanged our Lord is in his risen life. We might expect that he would not be his old self again. We know how people alter when success comes to them. They forget old friends and want a new entourage. The disciples might well expect that he would be different to them, and they might well be afraid to meet him after the way in which they had treated him. But our Lord was just the same as before. He forgets and forgives; and no doubt all along he had thought of his disciples as they were going to be—martyrs every one in his cause—rather than as they had been at first.

But there is one change we see in our Lord. He is more human, and, so to speak, more playful. How quick he is to recognize and appreciate kindness, and so he appears first to Mary Magdalen. The women had all through shown the most love for him; they were weeping as they followed him carrying his cross, and he turned to them saying: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not. . . ." They stood beside him at the cross, and they were at his sepulchre "early in the morning." There Magdalen sees him, but, taking him for the gardener, asks him where he has hidden our Lord that she may go and take him away. Then he speaks, and calls her for the first time by her name "Mary," and again she is at his feet, clinging to him in fear lest she should lose him again. His words, "Touch me not," were not a rebuke. They were meant to reassure her that he was not going to leave her again immediately, and that she need not fear, and he made use of her at once by sending her with a message to his disciples. How appropriate that he should have appeared as a gardener! Such flowers as he provides! and Jesus Christ is the real gardener of them all.

Our Lord is to-day just as he was in his risen life, and he comes to take what love we will give him, and if our hearts are with him he will come to us. He is so human and comes disguised in so many ways. He comes to us in the sick, the poor, the sorrowful, and insomuch as we do it unto them, he has said, we do it to *him*. He hides himself in them. Then he is hidden in holy Mass, and is always with us. He stays there waiting for us to come. Look out for him. You do not know how he may come. Sometimes he comes in joy, sometimes in trouble or pain. S Martin once

saw a poor, fallen man. He wrapped his cloak round him and carried him home. When he undid the cloak, behold ! it was our Lord. So we do not know when it may be our Lord. He waits for us on the altar every morning. Have trust in him, because trust is the highest form of love. *Repose in love*; this is trust. Have *that* in our Lord, then there need be no fear, not even when we come to pass through the shadow of death.

SEVENTH DAY : I

OUR RISEN LORD

Firstly, realize that in his risen life our Lord is always the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Secondly, that after his Resurrection he was more human than ever before. He shows himself so anxious to go out of his way to prove to his disciples that he bears no resentment, and that he does not see their faults at all so long as they are sorry for them. Thirdly, see how he goes and looks after each one in a different and special way and makes use of each, remembering the good things which had been done, as in the case of the women who showed their sympathy when the men had fled. He remembered it all.

He shows himself to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. No doubt they were very sad and very disappointed, and were discussing, as they went, how their hopes had been a failure, for they had all expected that he should have set up his kingdom here and have freed the country. It was the third day, and he hadn't risen. The light was all gone, and hope seemed over. They were sad, as death makes us sad. Therefore, if

death comes to those you love, look up to heaven, not down into the depths, and give glory to God for the joyful soul that is winging its flight to heaven. Do not dwell upon your own loss, but look up to something better and higher.

Whilst they were sad, the disciples were talking of him. He heard what they said, as he hears what we say. So say nice things. He had shown himself to Mary Magdalen as a gardener. Now he appeared as a wayfarer, and joined the two, who soon told him all that they were talking over. He drew all the story out of them, and then he explained to them the mystery which they had not understood, of how Christ had to suffer to enter into his glory. We have to learn to suffer and to bear sorrow or sickness, and Christ has shown us the way. God knows what is best for each one of us, and we are each given our different burden to carry. Let us only leave it all to him, and you may be sure that he takes us at our best, though it is equally certain that we have to suffer and to die as he chooses. Be ready, so as to enter into his glory in the measure in which you have shared his suffering. Not that life is to be one continual suffering. That is very rare, and our Lord's life was not that. No doubt he had very happy moments whilst he was living in his hidden life with our Lady. What we need is the will-power to be *ready* to suffer like him, when he sends it.

Then, as he talked to the disciples he seemed to be intending to go on farther, but they loved to hear all the beautiful things he said to them, and they asked him to stop. They hadn't yet recognized him, but presently he gives them Holy Communion, and they know him. Then he disappears. It is in Holy Com-

munion that we can see him best, so go often—every day if you can. Don't wait till you feel yourself worthy. You will never be that. It is in Holy Communion that you will recognize our Saviour and will find the spiritual life. Go regularly, and your eyes will be opened, and you will see that the next world is more real than the world in which you are living. Heaven is more real to us. S Paul says, "Our conversation is in heaven," so be living *there* principally, even though you have to attend to the body whilst this life lasts.

If you cannot go to Mass from illness or distance or other reason, then make your spiritual Communion and your spiritual visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Distance is no real obstacle. For spiritual Communion make your acts of contrition and of love, and unite your intention to the Masses which are being said, wherever they may be, and spiritual graces and blessings will be given to you, perhaps as great as though you had been actually present. Sailors do this when they are isolated at sea, following the day's Mass in their Missal and uniting themselves to Mass which is being said elsewhere. Help one another so as to make life spiritual, bright, and cheery. It is the sunshine of God's presence that matters.

After he had disappeared, the disciples told each other how their hearts had burned with love whilst he spoke to them. He had given them joy whilst teaching them the meaning of suffering. Remember that joy comes from heaven as well as sorrow.

God leaves a halo of his glory. Get the spirit of the risen Christ into your hearts.

SEVENTH DAY: II

I should like that, as a result of this Retreat, you should make one resolution, which I will offer for you at Mass, that you may be helped to keep it. Then keep to it, fighting, if necessary, with yourselves to do so, and examine yourselves from time to time to see how you are succeeding.

During my absence in America I want your prayers for my work, and that God will bless it for the benefit of the mission in Zambesi.

I recommend you to look over the notes you have taken during this Retreat and see what has helped you most, and take these thoughts as subjects for your meditations.

Another good plan for meditation is during the week to take the epistle and gospel of the following Sunday. By studying them beforehand we shall appreciate them and enjoy them more, and a year of this will be a great help to us, reading the context in the Bible, if the gospel or epistle requires to be made more clear.

We can vary our meditations by taking our *Imitation*, reading it every day to appreciate its spirituality. Then there are psalms, the *De Profundis*, the *Miserere*, or prayers like the *Memorare*, or hymns such as "Jesu, the very thought of thee with sweetness fills my breast." Don't try to meditate long at a time, but put your will-power into what you do, to do it well, and lift your soul to God. Be like a man of God, full of zeal, going along the way to heaven, and make progress. Do not be disheartened; remember that *God blesses the efforts*, not the results. Just stop where you are to please him, and you can always be sure that you are

satisfying him if you are really doing your best and trying. If God wanted more from you he would have given you the means. Pray to gain strength to do those things which are within your limits, and to do and to bear God's will.

As to our resolutions, we need not attempt too much at once. Supposing you are inclined to be quick tempered, resolve that you will not give way to your temper for a given time—say till lunchtime—then gradually extend the time, praying all the while for help. Make your resolutions practical in this way, whatever they may be. Take your life into your hands to make progress in sanctity, and ask for strength in holy Mass.

Never be discouraged. Have confidence and courage and trust in God, and if you fail in your resolutions make extra efforts in the future.

The old Greek philosophers used to say, "Know thyself," but S Augustine, the Christian philosopher, said : "Lord, that I may know thee, and know myself." We might well despair if we knew nothing of God and knew only ourselves, but knowing God first, and his goodness and his love, gives us courage.

Remember we have a Lord and Master who knows and loves us and who says to us, "Come unto me, and I will refresh you," and he makes his yoke sweet and his burden light. Even in spiritual life the burden remains. Ask for a desire for him, and for help from him to push your way from earth to heaven, and for a greater want for God.

SEVENTH DAY: III

SOME THOUGHTS TO SUM UP THIS RETREAT

There are three big things to touch us on earth: Labour, Sorrow, and Sin. Our Lord, when he came on earth, changed labour from what it had been considered—a curse—into a blessing. He took labour into his hands and baptized it with the sweat of his brow, working for thirty years at the carpenter's bench. We see how he lifted up labour in the mental, physical, and moral sense, so that the Catholic working man turns to Nazareth and sees our Lord sanctifying labour, and he feels that it is a blessing to him and not a curse. The so-called leisured classes, if they do nothing for God, are no better than tramps. There is no social distinction in his eyes. Ask yourself how you are working. In your homes, amongst the poor or the sick—no matter in what class—in hospitals or social work as ladies of charity, C.W.L. Prisoners' Aid, and the rest? If you do any of these things, cherish them, because they bring you into relation with Jesus Christ. He likes us to be working bees, not drones. It is a privilege to do something for our Lord. If you have nothing to do yet, then get it, and do it, but do not take it up and then drop it again. Look upon it as set you by God, and if you are doing your best for him don't be disheartened if your work does not turn out a success. Let your leading motive be God, and don't mind the rest; keep to the motive. Begin for God and end for God. Have something to do for God.

Secondly, there is sorrow. No one can escape from it. Our Lord found it when he came, and he took

sorrow in his arms. He baptized it with tears on his cheeks, and converted it into a guardian angel to lead us straight to heaven. Without sorrow there would not be much sanctity or sweetness. Incense has to be crushed, marble has to be hewn. How beautiful are the results! There is at Rome a statue by Houdin of S Bruno holding his finger before his lips, and it was so lifelike that when Pope Pius IX saw it he exclaimed: "I believe that if it were not for the rule of his Order, he would speak."

Women who have never suffered are rather hard. Sorrow softens the noble character, as a fierce light hardens clay and softens wax.

Thirdly, sin. Except our Lady, we are all sinners. So our Lord wrestled with sin and baptized it with the Blood of his Sacred Heart, turning the sinner into the penitent. He conquered sin and enables us to get strength to go forth and live a new life. In your acts of contrition, if you have no fresh sins on your conscience, gather up those of your childhood, your youth, and your middle age, and say: "Dear Lord, I am sorry."

Remember there is no escape from these three things —labour, sorrow, and sin. Just fling yourself on our Lord when you feel oppressed by them, put your arms round his feet in your crucifix and get courage; and if your sins make you ashamed and disappointed with yourself and you seem to make but little progress, let him rebaptize you to meet your troubles, whether in labour or in sorrow or in sin, and weave your religion into your life.

SEVENTH DAY: IV

As a last thought in the Retreat, remember that man is made to praise, reverence, and love God. It will show you how easy it is to *praise God* when you consider how natural it is to praise anyone for real excellence. God has given everything to us—the world of Nature and of grace. He has given us the Faith. He has given us all things, both in the natural and in the supernatural order. And in addition to all this he has given himself in the Blessed Sacrament, and lets us come to him every day in Communion. So how can we possibly help praising him?

Then we must *reverence him*, because it is through him that everything moves, and lives, and has its being. He looks after it all, and we must reverence God in all things.

And then we *love him* because he is working and serving us in all things. There is nothing we can do without him. He serves us day and night, and if he were to forget us for a moment only, we should cease to exist. Look at what he has done for us—if only in this Retreat. The grace he gives us is tremendous. If we could realize all he does for us, our love would be intense. Meanwhile we have to wait here, returning love for love as fully as we can, till the time comes when we shall see him face to face in heaven. Let us try to make our life one long psalm of thanksgiving till we are lifted up into the songs of heaven and the real life begins.

May we all meet at the golden gates.

NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT THE
CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART,
ROEHAMPTON
(SEPTEMBER 11-18, 1913)

FIRST DAY

DURING these few days of your Retreat I want you to come to know God better, to live alone with him, to throw off all other thoughts and interests, to give all you can to him, and to take all you can from him.

He wants you to do this quite simply, and "become as a little child." If he had required us to be clever, or rich, or learned, it would have been much harder, but the simplicity of childhood is all he asks. We have all been children, so let us try and return to the childlike spirit, and be free from fears and anxieties. Children do not worry about the past, neither are they anxious about the future. All they care for is the present. "Give it to me now," they say. So, let us not be anxious about our past sins, nor about our future possible difficulties. If we live with God and for God in the *present*, from day to day, and from hour to hour, we shall not go far wrong. Let us commend this Retreat to the protection of the Little Flower of Jesus, who, though once only an ordinary woman like us, yet is now near to God in heaven, and whose prayers for us cannot fail to win us many graces.

SECOND DAY: I

In life we find that most people have some special interest. With many men it is money-making, with women it is the fashions. But we Catholics know that God who made us is the principal object of our lives, and sad it is when Catholics fail to live up to this. S Ignatius says that God formed us for himself that we might praise and reverence and serve him. First to *praise* him. All creation was formed for his glory. The sun and stars, day and night, heat and cold, land and sea, all praise him, and man, too (though too many never realize it), was created to glorify God. There is nothing beyond God, and his glory must perforce be the end of creation, and nothing is to us of any real importance except God. Some people think that priests and nuns are quite right to make God their "business," and that he concerns them and not others, but we Catholics know that the praise, reverence, and service of God should be the first object of *all* his children, and that for this object we were created. S Ignatius said: "Serve"—not "love," because service implies love.

Reverence does not take much part in the lives of most people nowadays, but we should cultivate it, and especially for the Church and for the priesthood. All priests are not equally good or attractive, but that should make no difference in our reverence for the Order of priesthood. The Modernists of the present day have no reverence; on the contrary they want to teach the Church, and to set aside the guidance of the Holy Ghost, forgetting the precept of our Lord, that we

should be as little children and be willing to learn and not to teach.

Service shows our love. A mother who loves her child is ever ready to do services for it. So must we love God, and be on the lookout for ways in which we can serve him and so prove our love.

SECOND DAY: II

Prayer is the audience time of the soul with God. Do we appreciate it? Supposing it were revealed to us that we were to say no prayers for a year. How should we get on? Some people think they get on very well without prayer, but they are wrong. They don't get on at all, they get off, and soon leave the lines altogether. Have your pet prayers. When you are ill you will feel the benefit. Serious illness is not a time to begin unfamiliar prayers, but beautiful prayers to which we are accustomed bring peace and comfort to the heart.

People often say they cannot meditate, but they are wrong. It only needs a little attention. For instance, if you read the gospel of the Sunday each day during the week, and thought about it, many beautiful aspects would occur to you. Take the story of the prodigal son—the ungrateful child who wanted his own way and left home to get it. When he returned penitent how warmly he was welcomed by his forgiving father. Not a word about his sins; they seemed of no consequence now that he had repented of them. A beautiful meditation can be made on these simple lines. Then there are our Lord's words: "If a man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." How self-indulgent, instead of self-denying, we

are. How we resent the crosses which come to us, instead of taking them up and bearing them cheerfully and bravely. If we accept them for our Lord's sake we shall sanctify them and turn them into blessings. Then take the parable of the Loaves and Fishes. How our Lord opens his eyes to see those who come to him, how he opens his Heart to care for them, and his hands to give to them. What a lesson we can draw from this, and learn to try and follow his example in our dealings with others!

We can pray to God at all times, no matter what we are doing. Let us never forget him, nor lose him, and if we do so, let us quickly seek him again, and he will be ready to welcome us back as a mother would clasp her lost child to her bosom.

SECOND DAY: III

This meditation was a consideration of the wonderful works of God, by which he has prepared the universe for the benefit of man. The sunsets so marvellous, and for millions of years never twice the same, nor yet even the same for two minutes. The flowers, the mountains, the hills, and rivers. Man himself, with the wonders of his senses of sight, hearing, and taste, etc., and the power of his hands, by which such marvellous works of art and beauty have been created. How little we think of these things, how seldom we thank God for them! The earth cannot itself render homage to God. It rests with us to perform the duty, and to offer the song of praise, *Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

THIRD DAY : I

There are three classes of persons with regard to sin. The first class says that there is no such thing as sin, and that when people do wrong it is merely a misfortune, such as deafness, bad health, or poverty.

The second class admit sin, but they say God is good and will overlook it, and that all will be well in the end.

The third class is the Catholic Church, which tackles sin, and sees it in its true colours, recognizing it as the one hateful thing in the world. The Catholic Church fights against sin, and will make no compromise with it. Sin is anything that is thought, said, or done against God, and that hurts him. We cannot sin without knowing it, for will-power, and knowledge that it *is* sin, are necessary for the commission of sin. Shooting a man when the sportsman intended to shoot a rabbit is not sin, though it would bring him within the law of the land, but in the sight of God it is not sin, because will-power, and knowledge of what he was doing were absent.

God expects more from us Catholics than he does from others, because we know better than they, and our responsibilities are so much the greater. If we would know the effects of sin and what it has brought about, let us *look at the crucifix* and see there the work that it has done. The sins of malice, unkindness, wishing to hurt others and to do them a bad turn; these are the sins of which the crucifix reminds us, and in which we personally have had too large a share. Kindness to others is so beautiful, and it requires goodwill.

Cultivate it and always do a kindness and a good turn when you can.

Be judges of yourselves, and saviours to others. Do not dwell upon the faults of others, but think about your own.

Meet temptations with the simplicity and in the spirit of a "little child." Mind what God says and thinks, and care nothing for what "people" say. If people speak ill of us, and say things that are unkind and untrue, never mind. Provided God is satisfied with us, nothing else matters.

The world is often unkind, so suspend your judgement when you hear unfavourable reports about other people.

THIRD DAY : II

It is a good plan to have a book to carry with us containing our favourite prayers. We ought also to make great use of the rosary, which brings us so many special blessings. As regards confession and Communion, these are the great auxiliaries of prayer. It is well to go very regularly to confession, one advantage being that our conscience is thereby kept clear. Conscience is the voice of God, urging us to do better, and we must beware of allowing our conscience to grow dim. Another benefit of confession is that it is a *trouble*, and God blesses the trouble which we take in our spiritual life. Confession helps to keep the fine spiritual touch fresh and the conscience clear. It enables us to humble ourselves, and to repeat again our sorrow for forgiven sins, and to obtain spiritual graces and spiritual rousing which we need so much. A good rule for con-

fession is to confess anything for which you are sorry, and to come quite simply like a child.

The Blessed Sacrament in Holy Communion helps our spiritual insight. Humble yourself, and, after confession, go to Holy Communion. As an act of thanksgiving, I recommend the *Gloria Patri* for each member of your family, then nine times with the nine choirs of angels the *Anima Christi*. Adore, kiss, love, and reverence the five sacred wounds, and offer the precious Blood for the conversion of sinners. Say an "Our Father," and a "Hail Mary" for the holy souls in Purgatory, for the Church throughout the world, the Pope, religious Orders, and priests; then ask all blessings for yourself, and end with the prayer, "Behold! O kind and most sweet Jesus," and "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" to S Joseph for a happy death.

THIRD DAY: III

God created man for life, but sin brought sorrow and death, and death has been turned into a triumph by our Lord, who suffered both for us.

Few things are certain in this life, but we can be sure that any child we see who may live to become a man, will meet two things, sorrow and death. Some people regard death with terror, but *we* have no reason to do so. We can offer death as a perfect act of contrition and of love. Death is the highest offering we can make to God, and yet we must not take our own life. God does it for us, when and where and how and under what conditions he likes, and he takes us always at our best. The prayer, "O my God, I accept of death," gives a perfect description of

our correct attitude towards death. It is a perfect act of homage and of adoration, and death is converted into a means of entering heaven.

It is also, as the prayer says, a punishment due to our sins, and we offer it as an act of contrition and as the only means of entering heaven in union with the death of our dear Lord. We should try to look upon death, not as anything alarming, but as the beginning of life, passing from the world of shadows to the world of reality. Death is, as it were, the answering of a bell, calling us up, or as the "breaking-up day," the day for going home. There may be a short spell of Purgatory (perhaps not so bad as we think), in which the stains must be rubbed off us, but we may be sure that when the call comes we shall receive the strength and the courage to meet it, and the greatest act of our life will be the act of giving it up.

FOURTH DAY: I

We want enthusiasm for Jesus Christ. People in the past have had tremendous enthusiasm for very inferior objects, Napoleon, Prince Charlie, and so forth, but Christ is the man for whom it is worth while to make sacrifices, and to follow. The beauty of his life from childhood should inspire us as we see him going about doing good to the sinner, the sick, the dead, and telling us to "become as little children," for "of such is the kingdom of heaven." So stupendous was the beauty of his character, so marvellous his methods of dealing with sinners. He associated his own name for all time with that of the Magdalen, and called even Judas at the moment of betrayal "friend." The Old Testament had

impressed upon us things which we must *not* do. Our Lord gives us the Beatitudes, and teaches us what we have to do to earn a blessing. If only we follow his words, evil will disappear as darkness flies before the morning sun. And when we come to be judged, so sensitive and so appreciative he is, that any little acts of kindness done to his poor, or sick, or prisoners, he will reckon as done to himself, even if we did not realize it. "You did it unto me," "enter into the joy of thy Lord." The world is full of its own interests and pleasures, but there is nothing on earth that can compare with Jesus Christ. There is nothing really great but Christ. His life is the one love story of the world. To know him is eternal life, and for this end we should study him; the wonderful beauty of his person, which induced men to leave all and follow him; of his life, his character, his teaching.

There are many aids in the religious life, which are like a staircase leading up to the object in view, but as we grow older we feel that Jesus himself is the one subject for our thoughts, our devotion, and our love. Let us be steeped in love for him, and never forget that he is man as well as God. He wants our love. He is so sensitive he knows any little neglects on our part. He wants us to follow him in life and in death, and he is ready to take us to his breast and make us divine. Let us be humble, and strong, and crave for him, and remember his words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Think of these things and stimulate your soul with ardent, true, love of Christ.

FOURTH DAY: II

After speaking of two beautiful pictures—the Dresden Raphael of our Lady and Raphael's "Blessed Sacrament" at the Vatican—Father Vaughan spoke of the great privilege which belongs to Catholics and of the true Catholic spirit which should animate our lives. "Remember," he said, "that by baptism we become children of God by grace, with a right to special privileges and title-deeds to heaven. We become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, for not only are we called, but we *are*, the children of God. Having such special advantages, we must also be prepared for sacrifices, and must offer them with generosity. We must rise to a grand conception of life, and live our lives at all times, whether alone or in company, at work or at play, ever remembering that we are the children of God with its corresponding responsibilities and privileges."

FOURTH DAY: III

Nazareth has been described as the most obscure village in the most obscure province of the Roman Empire, and here it was that God made choice of a humble little maiden to be the Mother of his Son, whereby she became the House of God, Ark of the Covenant, Gate of Heaven, Morning Star, Refuge of Sinners. No higher dignity can possibly be conceived, and it is unspeakable. Mother of God! It is all contained in the "Hail Mary!" in the words of the angel Gabriel, to which we add a petition for her prayers now and at the hour of our death.

She has spoken very little, but she uttered her beautiful *Magnificat* and said that all generations should call her blessed. What a wonderful statement to have made! How few there are who can be sure that future generations shall even remember them! Think of the great men who have died within your own recollection. How little they are thought of now! They are gone and forgotten. But our Lady was right, and all Christians throughout the world call her "blessed" to this day. What a position she holds, and how absolutely unique! Mary, like the moon, reflects the glory of her glorious Son. We do not know that she did much—founded institutions and so forth. Her life was spent in ministering to her Son. How sublimely simple! Let us imitate her example and make ourselves the sanctuary of God. Let us come frequently to Holy Communion, and our Lord will, as it were, be born afresh for each communicant. Love him in return, fold him to your heart. Live a life of sacrifice for him, and pray for others that they may do the same, and so you will fulfil a magnificent mission. Live a bright life for God, and show others the way, like a beacon light or a lighthouse to point out the way of life. He is the Light of the World, and we can borrow it from him. How beautiful if each of us can be a light in his and her own way, shining to give brightness to others, until our own little light is extinguished in the light of the glory of God, a blessing I wish you all.

FOURTH DAY: IV

For your meditation in the morning I want you to take the Annunciation. If you have a right view of the Incarnation, you must give our Lady her proper place. We, who have the Faith, know that, as he came to us through her, so we may go to him by her.

FIFTH DAY: I

We try to see to-day what lessons are to be learnt from Nazareth, and we find that the first mission in life is to sanctify ourselves. In these busy days people are apt to be so energetic in good works that they neglect their own souls. Others honestly think that the life devoted to spiritual things is a wasted life, and they say: "Of what good is the life of a nun?" The true Catholic view takes in all phases of life. Let all spirits praise the Lord—no matter where or how. An act of love, where more is not possible, is as pleasing to God as preaching a sermon. Many persons would like to be working energetically for God, but illness strikes them down and their active lives are over. None the less, they can, and must, sanctify their retirement and make it an offering to God. Our Lord was not always active. Thirty years of his life were spent in the obscurity of Nazareth, doing nothing more than daily small acts of service to our Lady and to S Joseph. Then he began his life of doing good, and he lived three years of work, three days of suffering, three hours of dying, nearly three days in

the grave, and then he rose triumphant. Why did our Lord come in this simple way? He might as easily have come in splendour as a king, or in any other magnificent form; but he came *to be our example*, and therefore, like us, he came first as a little child. However poor we may be, and incapable of doing much for him, we can always sanctify our lives and offer him our trials and our difficulties. We can do little thoughtful acts of kindness; we can pray much for other people, for our friends, for priests and nuns, and we can make frequent acts of reparation; and in all this we shall be just as pleasing to God as though we were employed in public work for him. What really matters is not what we have or what we do; it's what we *are*. In the measure in which we are near to God, so shall we be able to help others. Very likely we shall make mistakes, but do not be put off by the fear of mistakes. Try, all the same. The cathedral at Westminster was at first regarded as a tremendous mistake. The society founded by S Ignatius was considered a mistake. It is *sin* that matters, not mistakes. Let us sanctify ourselves. Pray for others; be bright and cheerful, and build up a little Nazareth for ourselves, and learn there the lesson of Jesus, Mary, and S Joseph.

FIFTH DAY : II

FAITH

If we accept the divinity of Christ—and as the Church is his mouthpiece, it follows that we must accept her teaching. Protestants sometimes wonder that we can believe such things as the Real Presence and the Immaculate Conception. Faith is needed for

this, because faith is believing what we cannot ourselves prove, and is a very special grace and gift of God. As a telescope will enable you to see a star which you cannot discern with the naked eye, so faith enables you to believe in teachings which you cannot understand nor prove. Although the disciples lived with our Lord and were with him day and night, and knew his mind, and his heart, and were so much in union with him, yet they did not understand, and they doubted him and were disappointed. Why was this? Because they had not yet got the Faith. There is no greater gift. It is the pearl beyond price, and the gift which leads us to heaven. Prayer and the sacraments are as oil to feed the lamp of faith and to keep it burning brightly. What a gift it is! We may possess nothing and yet have *all*. It is an infinite treasure to men. Nothing can ever dim its beauty.

In heaven faith will no longer be needed, for faith will have passed into vision, and love will replace faith for evermore. Let us all travel from earth to heaven under the banner of the Church with the light of faith, that we may not lose our way.

FIFTH DAY: III

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD

Faith expresses itself in good works, and longs to fill souls with God. So our Lord left home at the age of thirty and began to go about doing good. He did good to all sections of the community and in all parts of the country, and before and after his good works he prayed. Never let us forget prayer. As we require food for the nourishment of the body, so we

need prayer for the support of the soul. If we neglect prayer we go wrong. No one ever goes wrong who is steadfast in prayer.

See our Lord in his public works, how gently and tenderly he deals with sinners. What delicacy and what tact and kindness! With the sick, with lepers, and with children what inexhaustible goodness and patience! And with how much ingratitude is he repaid! What a lesson is this! We often hear even good people say: "It's no good going on doing things for others; there is no gratitude." What we have to do is to realize that we are not working for gratitude, but for God. So let us do our best and leave the rest to him. It seems to me that God allows this ingratitude in order to test us, and to see if we are working for him. Think of the thousands our Lord helped in all kinds of ways, and yet at his trials there was not one voice raised on his behalf, not one to say a good word for him. The only kind word recorded was spoken by the penitent thief on the cross. Our Lord's work on earth was a love matter; he counted no cost, and expected no results. So should we do good solely for him, and care nothing whether others are pleased or not. That will not matter, provided we do it to please him. Begin at home. Be kind and good there, in spite of trials and difficulties. No one is free from trials. The Holy Father described his own life as one of crucifixion. Be patient, and, if we meet with no response and no co-operation, never mind. Don't be discouraged, and thank God things are not worse. Learn from our Lord what your life should be, and let your interest be aroused wherever there is a soul to be helped. If you have reason to think badly of yourself, do not be cast

down, but thank God you are not worse than you are. Remember the petition of S Augustine :

Domine Jesu, noverim me, noverim te.

SIXTH DAY: I

In a previous meditation we have considered the character of our Lord, his *mind* with its thoughts, his Heart with its love, his will with its actions. There he is for our imitation and to inspire and inflame our minds to follow in his steps.

Around us we see a world of darkness, in which God is left out. There is no room for God, as there was no room for our Lord in the inn of Bethlehem. The world does not talk against God, but it ignores him, and he is replaced by a thin veneer of civilization.

The worship of the body is a great feature in the world of to-day, but it is but a poor ideal. At best it is but a shell, enclosing for a time the pearl which is destined for God. The pleasures of this world soon pall, but God promises eternal pleasures in heaven, which are within our grasp provided we strive and struggle to reach them. Our Lord says we are to have our right place here, and to be ready to meet trials and troubles, by which we shall build up our characters like his. He offers to lead us. Let us live our lives on his model and be ambitious for heaven. Bear the things of this world so as to enjoy the things of heaven. We, assembled here to-day, are the chosen, special objects of his love. A Retreat is a great grace, to be alone with God and to hear about him for six or

seven days. The lesson we have to learn is to serve God where he has put us, and to bear any troubles that come, and be brave, brave, brave for God.

SIXTH DAY : II

One of the great evils of the present day is Socialism, and it is well that we should have right views on the subject. One good result of the movement is that it has revealed the social sore, which has to be dealt with. [Father Vaughan has written a book on the subject, which is now available, and would be useful to give the correct Catholic view of the subject.] It is always well to take opportunities for spreading good literature and to put in a good word for God when we have the chance.

We must not suppose that on leaving this Retreat we shall be free from trials and temptations. They are certain to come, and we cannot prevent them, but we can determine to resist them, keep the door of our soul shut against them and not mind them. As gold is tried in the fire, so must we be tried, and trials successfully overcome help to form character.

If God sends us pain, we must learn to bear it. Pain is good for us in many ways. It gives us will-power to bear it, power of endurance, and teaches us sympathy. Few people who do not know what suffering is are really sympathetic. Pain is a school of sanctity and will win a crown of reward for us in heaven. Our Lord says: "Can you drink of the chalice?" He does what is best for us, and if he sends us suffering he will also give us the strength to bear it. It is sad to see suffering and to be unable to relieve it. How helpless

one feels before a suffering bedside! But God can help and give power to endure.

In our troubles let us stand under the crucifix. That will make them seem small.

Give your love to Christ. What a trial is unrequited love! Love for Christ is never unrequited. There is a great waste of love in the world. Give yours to him, and he will reward you with a glorious eternity with him in heaven, a blessing I wish you all.

SIXTH DAY: III

GETHSEMANI

We read that when our Lord had taken Peter, James, and John into the Garden of Gethsemani he went from them a little and "began to fear"—to be sad, to be sorrowful even unto death, and to be heavy. How wonderful that the God-Man should fear! Why was this? He had never feared before. Why should such fear come upon him now, that he actually fell on his face to the ground? And he was "heavy" with that sensation of being wrong all over; the burden was so heavy that he could hardly bear it. What was this burden? It was the sin-burden of every sin ever committed, whether by the yellow man, the red man, the black man, or the white. He made perfect contrition for every sin ever committed.

He wrestled with fear, rose up, and trod it underfoot, and was never afraid again. When we are fearful let us remember that our Lord says to us, "Fear not, little flock," and let us say: "Dear Lord, give me your courage."

Our Lord was sad, sorrowful unto death; sad

because of the loss of grace. He knew how few cared for all he bore for them. Then an angel comes to him, bearing a chalice. He drains it, and is comforted and strong again, and says to his disciples: "Arise; let us go."

He had conquered triumphantly and had overcome fear and sadness. And now he is waiting for your pledge of love. Will you not offer yourself with all your imperfections—your life, your work, all you have and are, entirely and absolutely to him, to be as clay in his hands and to be done with as he wills? If you will but do this nothing else will matter. Sorrows and losses will be easy to bear, and you will say: "Let me, if thou wilt, lose everything, but never lose thee."

SEVENTH DAY : I

S Ignatius says there are three classes of men in their dealings with God.

We have examples of these three classes in the gospel. First, there was the young man who had great possessions. Our Lord offered him to become "perfect," but he didn't want to give up his possessions, and he went away sorrowful. I don't think that young man was lost, but he missed the highest good.

Secondly, another man was ready to come, but he wanted first to see to his father, who was dead or dying. His surrender was not unconditional, so our Lord didn't want him.

Others—Peter, James, and John—were mending their nets, and when the divine call came they *left all* to follow him, and have been with him ever since, and one, Peter, is now the Head of his Church.

Let us all follow the call of God. God wants us all to be better than we are, and he will help our endeavours, so much does he love each one of us. No matter where we are placed, we can aim at perfection. We are all servants, waiting to answer the bell when and where God may call us. Be generous for God. Use any talents you may have for him. Convert yourself into sweetness for him and towards others. Our Lord wants you to do something. Find out what it is. Troubles are sure to come. Take up your cross. Don't try to shake it off and talk about it to other people who don't care to hear. Be patient.

Each has some work to do. Be generous about it. Don't neglect prayer and spiritual reading. Without these it is impossible that you can attain to any height of sanctity. Study the lives of the saints as examples. They are there partly for our sakes. Avoid talking too much. Go about laden with sunshine, get rid of self, flatten it out, and never allow self to interfere with your rush upwards towards heaven. Find out what it is that our Lord wants of you, and give it—give it all, give it generously, and give it at once.

SEVENTH DAY: II

By our origin and our destiny we belong, as we have seen during this Retreat, entirely to God. We must live our lives for him, and if we trust him as we ought we shall be able to meet death like sleep, whether it comes to us suddenly or by any other slower process. And what is to happen to us afterwards in heaven? We do not know; we have not been told, and it is no good speculating. But this we do know, that

our Lord was Man as well as God, and that he rose from the dead with his human body, and after the Resurrection he was even sweeter, kinder, and more "playful" than before. How he disguised himself as a gardener before Mary Magdalen, and "did so" that the disciples did not recognize him at Emmaus, nor, at first, within the "closed doors." As our Lord rose again with his human body, so we may expect to rise again with ours, and then we shall be human saints, not angels.

Think of your life after death. Study our Lord's risen life, for so will be ours. You will find it all in the gospel story. Read it and study it there. The saints on earth have not yet reached heaven, but they will be the same there as they were here. There we shall be with God, who is our exceeding great reward, and that is enough for us to know. The difference between this life and the next is that here God is in everything; there everything will be *in* God. Let us endeavour to take with us a good character and to respond to grace whilst we have the opportunities. Troubles and disappointments in this life assume very small proportions when we compare this world with the next; and even here the less the world cares for us, the more our Lord cares. In heaven we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is, and we shall partake of his perfection.

As a crystal catches the heat of the sun and causes fire, so shall we catch the divine fire.

Be as children in the hand of God until we rest in heaven.

SEVENTH DAY: III

We have come to the end of the Retreat and must try and sum up all we have to do in life. When we come to die we shall no longer need faith, for faith will be turned into vision; nor hope, because hope will have been realized; but love will remain in us always. God is love, and love is the greatest thing there is. It is beyond everything—the noblest, the grandest, and the most precious. Nothing can supply its place. All knowledge is useless, for God doesn't want learning; he wants love. So philanthropy, zeal, and so forth, though all very well in themselves, are nothing unless they proceed from love. All we possess is from God, and, if we have few possessions, yet we have the wonderful gifts of Nature, which we accept so much as a matter of course and think nothing of. God's love is so wonderful in all these things, so perfect, and so finished. The clouds, the trees, the flowers, the birds. Well may we praise God in the *Gloria*. And later, when we get our first sight of heaven, what will *that* be?

And to think that all this world of beauty was made for us, and that God is working in everything himself, and that without him all would collapse and relapse into the "nothing" out of which he created us. Besides praising him for all this, we should reverence him for himself and his works in him. God is so wonderful he serves us and our needs in all the various things he provides. So must we serve him in return: show our love with whole-hearted worship; lead a good Christian life; put God first; heaven before earth, the soul before the body, eternity before time;

be alone sometimes with God; shut out the world, and try to find out what he wants of you; become as a little child; be sorry, very sorry, for all your sins and failures; tell him so quite simply, and let your heart be full of love.

May our last words when we come to die be: "O sweet Jesus, I do love thee!"

SEVENTH DAY: IV

As a last word I would recommend you, when you return to your homes to-morrow, to remember *prayer*. Never forget to pray for all your wants and for others—for priests, who need many prayers in their arduous and often trying work.

Be cheerful and bright; have a smiling face, and be, and look, happy. Do not be disheartened or discouraged, but be thankful to God and say your *Deo Gratias*.

Pay frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and if you are far from a church, make a spiritual communion in your room. Say the *Miserere*, a splendid act of contrition. Say it anywhere—in a train, for others travelling with you as well as for yourself.

The *Magnificat* and the *Antiphons* of our Lady are beautiful hymns of praise. You can never love our Lady too much, provided you love her Son much more. Then when you come to die all will be well with you for eternity.

NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT
ROEHAMPTON
(OCTOBER 23-27, 1915)

FIRST DAY

IN her last words Nurse Cavell is reported to have said that she was thankful, after the rush of life, to have had ten days to prepare for death. We, too, are all under sentence of death, and God gives us the four days of this Retreat in which especially to prepare for it. It is a great grace to be called to make a Retreat, and I want you to be very generous towards God, give him a great deal of your time, and be much in the chapel; not necessarily to say long prayers. If your mind won't work, never mind; just sit before the Blessed Sacrament and say, "I love, I love, I love," or tell him that you feel you do not love him enough, and ask him to make you love him more. What could please our Lord better than this? And you may be sure that it will bring you great graces. I want you to enter upon this Retreat in the spirit of these three words: *Tota*—*i.e.*, giving your whole self, body and soul, up to God; *Devota*—*i.e.*, with absolute devotion and love; *Sola*—*i.e.*, with determination to live these four days with God *alone*, putting every other thought out of your mind, and as though no one else were here at all. You must always let God be with you everywhere and in everything. The only place we can go to without God is hell. This Retreat will give us the

opportunity of making reparation for things that have been wrong in the past and of preparation for what still lies before us, using the present moment for both these purposes. If you can gain one new thought to help you on in your spiritual life, you will have gained much. In the last Retreat I made I learnt to value the practice of spiritual Communion in a way which I had never done before. So be ready to seize any thought that strikes you, and if you make your Retreat in the spirit which I have recommended to you of *Tota, Devota, Sola*, you will receive great spiritual graces, and you will find that you have not made it in vain.

SECOND DAY: I

In looking back on one's life, what a short time it seems since we were children in the nursery, and how unimportant many of the chief events of our past appear! How soon we have tired of things, even if they have interested us very much for a while! If we look forward, the grave seems to be still a long way off. And this is usually so: looking back, things seem short; looking forward, they seem long. Yet it may be but a short time before the grave closes over some of us, therefore we ought to make the best use we can of our present opportunities. Ask yourself this question: "Why did God create me and put me upon this earth?" The answer is: "He did it out of love." To begin with, God—*i.e.*, the Blessed Trinity—existed alone. He did not need us for his own happiness, because that was already sufficient and complete. Yet God willed to make us. Why? The answer is that he created us in order that we might participate in his

happiness. Just as we like to share a lovely sight or sound or enjoyment with others, and in so doing our own happiness is increased, so God, solely from love, created us—whether directly or by evolution doesn't seem to me to matter the least—to partake and share in his own everlasting happiness hereafter. That is what we came here for. The question is being asked to-day: "If God is love, why does he allow the terrible sufferings which are going on around us to-day?" The answer is that this life is only the introduction, index, or prologue of the real life which is to come, and that therefore sufferings and troubles are not of the great importance which we think them. This world would indeed be a very hard and selfish place if there were no suffering, because such trials bring out all that is best in us and have a softening effect, making us kind and gentle instead of hard and selfish. Whether we suffer here or not is not in itself very important, because this life is only a short passage to a better and eternal life, and what our Lord really cares about is the way in which we live and finish off our lives of preparation here. As the nursery and school prepare us for the fuller life here, so our stay on earth is meant to prepare us for the eternal hereafter. The one object of our life should be to find out what is the will of God and to do it. In this we shall be following our Lord's own example. His first recorded words during his life on earth were: "I must be about my Father's business." Later on he said, "I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me," and at the end he said, "If it be possible, let this chalice pass, but not as I will, but as thou wilt," ending with the *Consummatus est*, for God's will *had* been carried out

to the end. Our Lord had done what we must all try to do—viz., “Thy will on earth, as it is in heaven.” Our Lord’s answer, when he was told that his Mother and brethren stood without, is full of consolation for us, because he said that whosoever does the will of his Father, the same is unto him as a brother or sister or mother. So it lies in the power of each of us to be this to him, provided we set ourselves to seek and to do the will of our Father, as it is in heaven.

SECOND DAY : II

I want you to think this afternoon about the immense gift of grace which we receive from God.

What enormous privileges we have in being reckoned by God as his children. An adopted child with us can never belong to the actual flesh and blood of its adopted parent, but with our Lord it is not so. He calls us his children and teaches us that if we are children then heirs and co-heirs with Christ—*i.e.*, with himself. How generously our Lord deals with us! How kind and forgiving! No matter what we have done wrong, we have only to be truly sorry and to tell him so, and all is forgiven and forgotten. We are like the prodigal son, whose father did not wait to hear his son’s words of penitence, but made haste to load him with gifts as soon as ever he saw him returning. We have to go through the forms of confession and absolution because it is so ordered, but our Lord’s loving forgiveness does not wait for that, and is ready awaiting us at the first signs of true contrition for our sins. Our Lord’s treatment of the Magdalen—the woman who had been a sinner—how consoling to us!

So much did he appreciate her loving sorrow for her sins that not only did he give her instant forgiveness, but said that wherever his gospel should be preached there also should her loving contrition be made known.

SECOND DAY: III

Since the end for which we have been sent into this world is to prepare us for life eternal, it is well to ask what steps we are taking to attain this end?

In the affairs of ordinary life what immense trouble people will take to achieve their objects! How valuable it would be if such similar efforts were directed towards spiritual perfection! People will devote themselves for years in preparing for a profession in art, music, or even in tiptoe dancing! Retreat is a time when we can look into our spiritual needs, see how we stand, and decide what steps we can take to make ourselves fit for our high calling. God has given us so many means of attaining to this, and none of them should be neglected nor abused. *Time*—how do we use it? or do we waste it? *Health*—do we take care of it or injure it? *Sleep* is not a waste of time. It is a necessary process and blessing, and we can turn it into a precious means of spiritual perfection by consecrating it to God. Before you fall asleep, make a practice of offering each beat of the heart as an act of thanksgiving, each breath you draw as an act of sorrow for sin, and each breath you send out as an act of love. Then your sleep will become a precious offering and means of grace.

Consider well what steps you are taking to make

sure of heaven, and of the everlasting joys for which you were created. If you lose them it will be through your own fault!

THIRD DAY: I

Amongst the means given to us to attain to the end before us, are prayer and the sacraments. God has created us to love and serve him here, and to be happy with him for ever in heaven. Nothing but sin can keep us away. Nowadays people are apt to say that there is no sin, and that God doesn't mind, but look at your crucifix, and ask yourself if our Lord would have endured all that suffering if there had been no sin to redeem us from, and if he had not willed to give himself personally for each one of us. God has given us commandments which we must keep, and not regard them as of no consequence. Such things are necessary even in the temporal order, for without them life would be chaos. Therefore in the Spiritual Order how far more important that we should be faithful to our obligations. Each one of us must obey God's call, and no other. Some he calls to a religious life, others to a life in the world. Listen for that Voice, for you never know when he may speak to you. Learn to know God (*Noverim te*) and to know yourself (*Noverim me*). Use the *Miserere* much. It is so beautiful and so heartfelt with its *Amplius lava me* and its *Cor mundum crea in me*, and so forth.

Eve would never have fallen if she had not failed to realize the importance of small commands. It was such a tiny obligation amidst such endless blessings! But the devil told her then, as he is trying to tell us

now, that God does not really mind, but God *did* mind, and *does* mind still, whether we are faithful children or faithless!

THIRD DAY: II

This afternoon I want to talk to you a little about sin and of our attitude before God in this respect. When we think of all God has done for us, and of the manner in which we behave towards him, does it not make us feel that if we did penance from to-day to the day of our death it would still not be enough?

The remarkable thing is that God is never tired of forgiving us, no matter how many times we offend and make our act of contrition. Forgiveness is always there ready to be had for the asking, and the oftener we ask the more ready and pleased he is to give it. What an impertinence sin is! The great Creator of the Universe says: "You must," and I venture to reply: "I will not!" This is really worse in Catholics than in others, because God has revealed himself more to us, and naturally more is expected from us. People outside the Church feel this, and say, "And a Catholic, too!"

How is it that some have the Faith and others not? It is God's revelation, nothing else. Many outside the Church *long* to have our gift of faith, but cannot get it. I have met with many such cases myself. It was the same in our Lord's lifetime. In the sixth chapter of S John we read that he prepared his disciples for the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament, but many could not accept it, and left him in consequence. Then our Lord asked S Peter if he and the others would leave him,

too, and S Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Remember this in talking to Protestants: "If you believe in the Teacher you must accept his teaching."

The whole point depends upon our belief in him. Our Lord cares to know that we believe in him and love him. He asks S Peter—he condescends so far—and accepts the reply: "Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee." Let this be our answer, too! Creep close to Jesus and tell him how much you love him, and how much you wish to make reparation for those who love him not.

Then you will be pleasing to him, and all will be well. So be it.

THIRD DAY: III

The only thing in life of which we can be certain is that we must die. Most of us have a great fear of death, but that is not necessary, and I think that so long as that fear lasts it is a fairly certain sign that we are not going to die yet! People are apt to dwell too much upon the painful and disagreeable accompaniments of death. These are, of course, unpleasant, but we must not let our minds dwell upon them. They do not really trouble the dying person. He is more occupied in thinking about his soul than his body, and usually a Catholic does not mind death at all when it comes to the point, and he is quite resigned. At least, so I have found it in the numberless death-beds which I have attended. The great thing is to trust our Lord, and when the time comes (as it certainly will), to throw ourselves on his mercy and say: "I have been a

wretched sinner, and have been a disappointment to thee, and have wasted and spoilt my opportunities, but, O my Jesus, I love thee, I trust in thee" (*In Te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum*). It is better at that time not to worry oneself too much about past sins after we have made a good confession. The devil would like to keep us uneasy and worried. We should be very sorry for our sins, and leave the rest to God, and think far more about him and his mercy than about ourselves. Death is the most heroic act of self-sacrifice which we can make, though we cannot make it of ourselves and must wait till our Lord calls us. Let us be ready for the summons always. Let us put ourselves right with God, and when the time comes we shall find that fear has all passed away, and we shall be glad to go. Death is the only means by which we can possess God and be with him eternally and completely. This life is only the ante-chamber or the robing-room, as it were, and we must pass through the gates of death before we can begin our real life, not, indeed, as we have feared, through the valley of the shadow, but under the triumphal arch of death, and our Lord will see us safely through to the other side.

FOURTH DAY: I

If it is asked for what purpose we were born into the world, the answer would be: "To love and serve God and to live with him for ever hereafter." Many holy men have taken these words for their lifelong meditation, but we are very apt to be dissatisfied, thinking ourselves and our talents fitted for something better than we are doing.

When we have these despondent moods it would be well to study our Lord's life at Nazareth, that sleepy little village of which it had been said: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

In that little village home, with a simple village maid for his mother, he spent thirty years of his life. Of course, he might have chosen a very different kind of life, but he selected this kind of life to be a lesson to us. We are too much inclined to look down upon our less fortunate neighbours, and to be jealous of those above us, but, after all, these things are of no account before God, and social distinctions make no difference before him. The infant of the rich is no more to him than the infant of the poor, nor the King than his chauffeur! Let these thoughts sink down into your hearts, so that when you are dissatisfied with your state of life you may meditate on the home life of our Lord. There are three points to be considered in this respect: (1) The annunciation; (2) the nativity; (3) the hidden life.

As regards the first point, if God had so willed, he might have chosen a great queen to be the mother of Christ, but he selected a maiden remarkable for only three things—viz., her humility, her chastity and her poverty. Dwell on these points and see how you can apply them to yourselves.

Secondly, Christ might have come in royal state as a full-grown man or in Cæsar's Palace. Instead of this, he chose Nazareth!

Thirdly, there he lived his hidden life doing nothing special but fulfilling the will of God. Too often we crave for publicity and excitement or interests, quite forgetting the great motive which God requires—viz.,

his glory. Let no thoughts of this kind trouble you. If God wants you he will call you. Meanwhile, forgetfulness of God and of Christianity causes God to turn his back upon us, and war with all its frightfulness is the consequence. Let those who are still faithful pray and make reparation for all the wrongs which are being committed against God's glory.

FOURTH DAY: II

We have already considered the fact that God put us here to serve and love him and after this life to be happy with him in heaven. To help us to achieve this he has given himself as an example of what our lives should be. Therefore we should study our Lord's character, in order to be the better able to imitate it. Character is formed of mind, heart, and will, and we may pick out from the Scriptures various different points in our Lord's life in connection with each of these three separate powers. We should dwell upon his wonderful cleverness, united with simplicity and kindness; his loving gentleness in dealing with the poor and with sinners; his powers, which he did not exercise to the full, but only so far as they would be useful to us; and all so beautiful.

FOURTH DAY: III

From the point of view of the world, our Lord's life on earth was a ghastly failure. Born in a poor stable; hunted into Egypt, a country detested by the Jews; returning to live till he was thirty years old in an obscure place like Nazareth, with nothing to do;

then for three years, before the world, "going about doing good"; done to death most cruelly without a good word said for him nor a friend to help. Yet through his life he was always kind. Follow him in this, whatever it may cost you. To a brother Jesuit, lately appointed rector, I wrote that I congratulated him principally because he would have opportunities for doing kindnesses, which our Lord's life had been spent in doing for all, not omitting Judas, when he washed his feet. My friend replied that he had always felt this too, that he had always been under kind rectors, and now hoped to be kind himself.

Apply the principle of taking example from our Lord's life in every way you can in your everyday lives.

FOURTH DAY: IV

A FEW WORDS AFTER BENEDICTION

Try and imagine that you were present with the disciples when our Lord said to them: "If any man *will* come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Think this over, and apply it personally to yourselves.

FIFTH DAY: I

I want you this morning to think of our Lord as our example in his Passion. He went through all this suffering for us and to show us how to suffer. He might have been born on earth and immediately afterwards he might have ascended to heaven. If he had done this we should have loved him, but we should have had reason to feel that he had not experienced

suffering. But now he has been through it all, and when we suffer we are following him. He gave himself up on the cross of Calvary for our sins and sanctified suffering and labour for our sakes. Some people object to do work of kinds, but what does it matter whether we wash china or a doorstep or ourselves? It is all the same.

Then why did our blessed Lady suffer so much, she who had never sinned? She suffered as an example for us, so that when we are called upon to suffer we should bear it with patience, giving our hearts and wills to God.

People sometimes wonder why does God allow this war, with its consequent cruelty towards innocent Belgians, Poles, etc. I reply: "Why did God permit the Passion of our Lord?" And the answer is: "Out of love." It is a law of Nature that where love is, there is suffering (*Sine dolore non vivitur in amore*). The martyrs suffered because they loved our Lord, and we should each in our own way be ready to accept such suffering as God in his goodness may see fit to send us, and say: "O Lord, take my life, my will, my memory, my understanding, but give me thy love, thy cross, thy crown!"

FIFTH DAY: II

Be careful through life to be kind to everyone. Kindness to others is worth far more than many strict self-imposed penances which some of us like to practise.

Be truthful, and take care not to take part in gossip and exaggerated reports of the doings of other people.

If God sends suffering, accept it, and remember S Paul's words that we can "make up what is wanting in the Passion of Christ," which means that we can bear our own share and part in his Passion, and through suffering attain at last to our crown.

Let our hearts be full of love for our crucified Lord. *Amor meus crucifixus est* ("My love is crucified").

FIFTH DAY: III

Our Lord's risen life is a type of what ours will be. See how generous he is, and how he treats his faithless disciples, how human and kind towards them! No reproaches, no recrimination, all their failures towards him forgiven and forgotten. Try to shape your lives on his. Take him for your pattern, and try to live like him here, so that you may one day follow him and live with him in heaven.

NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT
ROEHAMPTON
(JUNE 5-10, 1916)

FIRST DAY

I WANT you to spend the next four days alone with Jesus, and as much alone as though each one was the only person here, so that we may try and learn from Jesus what he requires of us—*i.e.*, what he wishes us to *drop*, what to *take up*, what to *do*, and what to *be*. It is often far easier to do his will than to bear it; but remember you are his, bought with a price—the price of his precious Blood. If we had suffered all this for him it would have been less surprising than that he should have condescended to do this for us.

Do your utmost during the coming four days to learn what God requires of you, and to act upon it; then your Retreat will not be made in vain.

SECOND DAY : I

We must reverence, praise, and serve God. So far as we praise God we partake in his holiness. Praising God uplifts the character and is the highest flight of prayer.

S Ignatius tells us to “serve” God. He does not say “love” him, because the fact of serving him *is* love. A mother shows her love for her child by the

devotion of her service, and that is what *we* should do before God. This is very easily done. Each breath we take, every action we do, may become an act of love if we but offer it as such. Let us be simple before God. Our Lord says: "Become as little children." Great people, when they come to die, are often just like children, asking for their rosaries and kissing the crucifix. This is a simplicity which our Lord likes. Failure here may be success in God's eyes, and the man who has lost his leg and the girl who seems such a failure may, before God, be huge successes.

As regards suffering, people often wonder why God allows it. But God sees it all in its true proportion, and that in many cases our troubles here are but as stepping-stones to our eternal salvation.

SECOND DAY: II

All Creation is the work of God, and in Nature we see perfection and endless variety. But Nature cannot praise God in return, therefore praise depends upon us, and no words of praise can be more beautiful and uplifting than the grand *Gloria in excelsis*.

We should use God's creatures so as to make them helpful to our spiritual life and with the object of praise, reverence, and service to God.

Every event of our lives—our health, sickness, troubles, trials, and happinesses—can all be applied to the same service of giving glory to God, and we must have no dealings with anything which stands in the way of this great end.

SECOND DAY: III

The tendency of the present day is to deny the fact of sin and of its consequences. Look at your crucifix, and that will tell you what sin is and what it has done. Sin kills the soul, and the worst forms of sins are those maliciously done to injure others. Beware of unkind criticisms; do not believe all you hear; suspend your judgement. Live in abiding sorrow for sin and for its results. Make constant acts of contrition. None more beautiful than the *Miserere*, and say it often, say it with loving trust. The highest form of love is trust.
In te Domine speravi.

SECOND DAY: IV

Death is the only means by which we can get to God, and we have to await his time for ringing us up. We should offer death, especially in the Mass, at the moment of the Memento for the Dead, as an act of love, of homage, and of submission to the will of God. Death is simply a dropping off of the earthly shell, and the spirit lives on and *sees God*, which it would never do on earth. We should offer our death as a great act of contrition for all the sins of our life, and put our trust in the merciful love of our Lord, which sums up all religion.

THIRD DAY: I

We ought to dwell a great deal upon the mercy and love and goodness of our Lord. During his life on earth he helped everyone who was in need, and he

teaches us this principle in the parables of the Lost Groat and of the Lost Sheep in the Wilderness. Not content with leaving the flock to go in search of the lost one, he carries it home—does not drive it before him, as he might well have done. In the case of the parable of the Prodigal Son, what love was lavished upon the penitent boy! So much as to arouse the jealousy of the elder brother. And then the Magdalen, how generously our Lord treats her! He sees her love and her sorrow, and accepts them without making any mention at all of her past sins. He wants of us a humble and a contrite heart, with sincere sorrow for the past and purpose of amendment for the future.

When the time comes we should enter upon *death* in this spirit. Do not worry about your past sins, which have been already confessed, but give your remaining time to God, and thank and love him. Kiss the crucifix, and, whilst you kiss his feet, do not fear that your act of love and contrition will not be accepted. Our Lord never disappoints us. We often disappoint him. But his loving heart is always open to receive us, no matter what our past has been, so we have only to thank him and to love and, above all, *trust* him.

THIRD DAY : II

Prayer is the food of the soul, and is necessary for spiritual life. The *vocal* prayers of the Mass are offered with their strong words for all present, and are the nourishment and life of the soul.

In our *meditations* we must realize the presence of God, think of his magnificent attributes, and let the soul bask in the sunshine of his presence.

THIRD DAY: III

The Incarnation is indeed an astounding fact, for our Lord put aside his glory and came on earth as a little child, and became flesh for us and for our salvation, and offered his life and sufferings for us—*i.e.*, for each one of us. Had one person been left out, he would have been ready to come again and bear it all a second time; but that was not necessary, as all the human race were included.

Every Catholic should live his life under this influence and inspiration, feeling himself to be “called to be a saint,” and to make up, as far as he can, for the coldness and indifference of the world. Our Lord was indeed the “Victim of Sin.” S Paul went so far as to say that he has become Sin for us, who knew no sin. He did even more than this, for he becomes *Bread* for love of us and to help us in the battle of life. You who have to go out in the world, take example from our Lord, and be a saviour to your sisters.

THIRD DAY: IV

Let us think about the hidden life at Nazareth, where our Lord spent thirty years out of his thirty-three years of life. This looked something like a loss of opportunities, and so do many instances where we see talents and gifts undeveloped and unused. But what God wants in us is not talent, but *character*, and that is the lesson we draw from the hidden life, when our Lord helped his Mother and worked with his foster-father in the carpenter’s shop.

Let us each try and build up a little "Nazareth" in our hearts, to form our characters, and to make our souls as fit as we can for God.

FOURTH DAY : I

Our Lord's words, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head," sum up the three years of his public life, in which "he went about doing good." He spoke to the people and taught them, and said: "*Learn of me*, because I am meek and humble of heart." True humility consists in knowing ourselves, as S Bernard says: "By knowledge of self we become vile in our own eyes." If we have, or are, anything to be proud of, common sense tells us that it all comes from God and is no credit to us. Let us be proud of belonging to God and humble in all other ways.

Again, our Lord said: "*Come to me*, all you that labour and are burdened." God never takes anything from us without giving us something in return. If we go to him in our troubles, he will give us strength and support. Again, he said: "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The Catholic Church is the mouthpiece of Christ, and she gives us the repose and the freedom of certitude, for which we can never be grateful enough. Other Churches have doubts and contradictions, but we *know*, and this knowledge gives us the freedom which our Lord promised.

Our Lord was so good to people's bodies as well as to their souls. In these days great attention is given to the bodily needs of our soldiers, but their spiritual needs are in danger of being overlooked. As Catholics we must do what we can in this way.

FOURTH DAY: II

We can look upon our Lady as the one creature in Creation with whom God was not disappointed, and our Lord gave her to us with his dying breath when she stood there at the foot of the cross, an example to us of submission to his holy will.

Who can say how much help we have had from her in heaven as our Mother. Let us give her great love, for our Lord likes to see her loved, and she will pass on our love for her to her Son.

FOURTH DAY: III

This evening we will consider our Lord's Passion and agony in the Garden. Here he made that great act of contrition which was to include all the sins of the world, and from him we can learn how to make better ones ourselves, so that, uniting our acts with his, they may be lifted up by his sacred hands. After three years of hard public work he was hunted down by his countrymen. It had always been his habit to pray, both before and after his work, and now he prayed and entered the Garden of Gethsemani. He left eight disciples at the gate of the Garden, taking on with him the three—Peter, James, and John—who had been witnesses of the glory of his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and who were, therefore, the better fitted to share his coming humiliation.

He began "to fear." His face became white as his garments, and his agony was so great that he was flung on to the ground, and his sweat poured from him in drops of blood. Why did he go through all this

agony? The answer is that our Lord is always a stone's throw ahead of us, and he knew the sufferings which the martyrs would be called upon to bear for his sake; but he has been through worse than they have, though some of them could not support it. What courage it gives us to know that, whatever we may have to bear, he has been through it all, and far more; and though he asked that if possible it might pass from him, he added: "Not my will, but thine, be done."

After the "fear" he began to be heavy, oppressed, and overwhelmed. This was by the sins of the world, for each one of which he was to make an act of contrition. Well may we unite our acts of contrition with his at this supreme moment.

Then he began to be sad and sorrowful. Why? Because of the many who would be lost, after all, when they could so easily be saved, caring nothing for it and tossing their privileges away. He was bathed in a sweat of blood, and an angel of consolation came with the chalice to console and strengthen him. The reason he suffered so greatly was that every sin ever committed by man was laid upon him, so that he became "a worm and no man."

In his agony he prayed the longer till the Angel of Comfort came to him. Then he left the garden and was done to death.

Here is the great lesson for us when we have any terrible grief—we must pray as he did. We are not to give up, but must pray the longer and go on bravely till the cross is exchanged for the crown, our mission fulfilled, the battle fought and won, following the Captain of our Salvation.

FOURTH DAY: IV

How to use My Crucifix

Hold it in your hand and ask yourself: "Who is this? I know his life and how he went about doing good and ended by suffering and dying for me, and I know that he is my only and my best Friend. Perfect God and perfect Man. Let me kiss the crucifix and thank him for all he did and suffered for me, undergoing a shameful death and forsaken even by his friends." The injustice of it all and the ingratitude from those who had been so dear to him must have been the worst trial of all. *Why* is this?—as I look on my crucifix. Why this ill-treatment and this Passion? He offered himself as a sacrifice because he loved *me*. He bears it all for me. *Amor meus crucifixus est!* Let us look lovingly at our crucifix and offer the wounds in the *right hand* for the conversion of sinners, for the impure, the broken, the proud, and the jealous; the wounds in the *left hand* for the dying, that they may not perish; the wounds of the *right foot* for those in Purgatory, that they may speedily pass out of prison into the Divine Presence; the wounds of the *left foot*, offer them for the wants of the Church, for priests and religious communities and the young. And the wound in the *side!* Ask that you may never be separated from him again, and say to him: "O my Jesus, my love, crucified for me, let me never forget thy wounds." After Communion go to the five wounds. Say one *Pater* and five *Aves* for each wound. Get to love your crucifix, and let us hope to die with our lips pressed against his sacred side.

FIFTH DAY: I

Having thought of our Lord in his hidden life, his public life, and his Passion, we have now to think of him in his risen life, and try to learn by his life after the Resurrection what our own will be like. People vary very much in their views of heaven. Some think we shall all be like angels or, perhaps, not know each other through being so entirely absorbed in God. We know that holy Job said, "In my flesh I shall see God," for when we die this house of clay falls to pieces; but we go on, for the soul does not die, to be reunited to the body at the resurrection of the body. The best view to take of heaven is that which our Lord describes. He calls it a "banquet," a home-coming when he will be there to minister to us. We are not to be angels, but human saints, with all beauty and purity, and elevated to see our Lord in heaven in the same humanity as he bore on earth. We know that when he rose from the dead he remained the same kind, indulgent Friend that he was before. He appeared first—so far as we are told—to Magdalen, the sinner, and to Peter, who had fallen so sadly in denying that he knew him; but our Lord made no mention of these things; they were forgiven and forgotten because they *loved*. He appeared to Magdalen as a gardener, and to the Apostles going to Emmaus as a traveller. He was "in the flesh," and as *he* rose in the flesh, so shall *we*. He was as human and kindly after he rose from the dead as he was before, helping the fishermen when they had toiled all night and had caught nothing, even preparing breakfast for them. No reproaches for their desertion of him in his

Passion, but talking to them of the kingdom, I think he pictured them as future martyrs for his Faith, and saw their virtues and not their faults, and commissioned them to go and preach everywhere, in spite of their previous failures and human weaknesses. It seems to me that as our Lord was after his Resurrection, so shall we be. We shall live our future life as he lives his, when, later on, we see him with our own eyes. We may learn from the risen life that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He never changes, but is ready, if we are. Try never to hurt but always to please him, and do and bear what he lays on us. Our reward will be heaven, which means *all*. As here we can see God in everything, so there we shall see everything in God!

FIFTH DAY: II

Justification by faith was misinterpreted by Luther, since he dreaded punishment, and felt he could not avoid sin and its consequences. He said that sin does not matter provided we believe in God, and faith will put matters all right for us without troubling much what we do, because God can cover our sins with his merits. That was Luther's doctrine, and a very false one it is. The Jews knew better than that. They cried: *Amplius lava me*, "Though my sins be as scarlet," "Cleanse me from my sins," etc. According to true Catholic doctrine, our Lord is the cause of our justification, and in order to qualify ourselves for this grace, faith and keeping the Commandments are required of us. In baptism original sin is washed out, and God's grace is there over the child, all imperfection is re-

moved, and faith, hope, and charity are implanted in its soul, and remain until the child comes to the use of reason. By grace it is changed from a *creature* of God to a *child* of God, with title-deeds to the kingdom of heaven. The grace of God transforms the child in this way, and it includes every baptized person until the grace is lost by sin or by heresy. By mortal sin all justification is lost, but by going to confession and making a good act of contrition all is returned to us with fresh sacramental graces. Such is God's wonderful patience!

Let us be second to none in our appreciation of his marvellous goodness to us, but strive always to be first in our devotion and in our wish to prove our gratitude until the day breaks and the shadows pass away.

FIFTH DAY: III

In the eucharistic life of our Lord we see his permanent Incarnation on our altars, where he remains ever really and truly present. He thus repeats mystically in the Blessed Sacrament the life which he lived here on earth. At Bethlehem he was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Here he rests in our altars, veiled in wheaten bread, and there he remains as absolutely helpless and dependent upon us for care and for everything as he was in the stable at Bethlehem dependent upon his Blessed Mother and S Joseph. The word "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread." Then our Lord spent thirty years in the little village of Nazareth, where he was known to very few, and of all those who passed along the roads from other parts, no one knew of him nor cared. Here it

is very much the same now. Only those who belong to him understand and care, the rest pass him by unheeded.

In his *public* life on earth he went about doing good, so here he gives to all who come to him or who want him even at night. He is taken by the priest to the sick and dying to console and comfort them in their last hours. His *Passion* is repeated in the eucharistic life, when he is sacrilegiously treated, as has been done many times in this war, dragged from the Tabernacle and trampled under foot! Also, when persons in bad faith come, as traitors, with a pretended kiss of peace. Yet he goes through all this ill-treatment and bears it for the sake of his friends who love him.

His triumphant risen life we see at Benediction, when he is raised on his throne with flowers, candles, and music, and in processions of the Blessed Sacrament, and so on, living his life over again for each one of us, and living it for each individual separately when approaching the altar rails. How beautiful is his eucharistic life!

Remember, we are the “spoilt children” of the sanctuary, and if we could spend our lives in saying *Deo Gratias*, it would still not be enough! Do it as much as you can with the *Tu solus sanctus*, and remember that we are all called to be saints!

FIFTH DAY: IV

We finish as we began with the thought of all the love, praise, and reverence which we owe to God. He is present in everything. All his works praise him. Let us always be blessing him, according to the words

of the beautiful psalms of praise, *Laudate Dominum*. We see his gifts everywhere working in everything around us, and they exceed all praise.

Reverence him for his presence, and work for him. Serve him in return for all he has done for us. All is as nothing compared to God! One cannot add to nor subtract from the infinite! And all he made was for us, so that we might partake of his glory and of his eternity. This thought will help to lift our souls when we are depressed with earthly worries, and we shall feel ourselves carried up to heaven and to God.

Put all you do from this time forth under the intention of praise, reverence, and service of God. Time will soon pass into eternity, and looking back here we shall see how unimportant everything was. Then death and sorrow will be no more, and all tears will be dried. Meanwhile, we must wait and be patient, do what God wants of us, and bear what he lays on us, and work for him.

We are born, not for what passes, but for eternity!

NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT
GRAYSHOTT
(JUNE 7-11, 1921)

FIRST DAY: I

First thought. — That we belong inalienably and entirely to God, and depend on him for everything. Therefore we owe him our love and our service, for love *is* service. Thank him and praise him for all his goodness. Tell him how much you love him. Don't be always *asking*, but *giving*. Give your love and your thanks and your praise. If you want to please a person, you praise his things, or his children, etc. A candidate for Parliament does this, for he knows it is the surest way to get votes.

FIRST DAY: II

On confession, which should be simple and with real sorrow for sin, and a firm purpose of not falling into it again.

FIRST DAY: III

People make the mistake of thinking that life here should be a preparation for death. On the contrary, our life should prepare us for *life eternal*. Though the body falls to pieces and decays, yet we have our Lord's promise of its resurrection, and that we shall be, not angelic spirits, but human spirits in the future life.

SECOND DAY: I

Let us take a day of our Lord's life for our thought this morning. He said one night to his disciples: "Come into a desert place"—probably for a little rest and for a little quiet—on the other side of the water, where there was much grass, and where they could have a day to themselves.

But this plan was frustrated. People crowded around him, bringing their sick and their troubles, so that he gave his day to them, instead of to the disciples as he had intended. When he saw that the people were hungry, with nothing to eat, he worked the miracle of feeding them with the loaves and fishes, and when all had gone home he went up into the mountain whilst the disciples crossed over by sea. A sudden storm arose, which alarmed them. They feared the worst, when our Lord himself appeared, walking on the water. As our Lord's day was interfered with in this way, so our plans often fall through, and nothing seems to go right. Others succeed whilst we fail—but, never mind! go on sowing the seed, and leave the result to God. Be kind, say a friendly word, give a smile or a pressure of the hand. Such small acts of kindness may have results which you little suspect. Have a definite plan of life. Do not leave your days to chance, but arrange them and carry them out so far as you can. When at all possible, your days should include Mass, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, a chapter from the *Imitation*, and some definite work or duty properly fulfilled. If your efforts seem to be in vain, never mind, but *go on*, so your character will be built up, and at last

you will find that, in spite of all your apparent disappointments, our Lord will have given you the victory!

SECOND DAY: II

In his hidden life in the Tabernacle Christ waits for us always, although the world neglects him so utterly. On earth he was so simple, and he is the same still. His simplicity appeals to us; a child loves the crib best.

SECOND DAY: III

Prayer is as necessary for the soul as taking food is for the body, and *both* we must do for ourselves. In spiritual reading our Lord comes to us; in prayer we go to him. Distractions come, of course, but we must avoid them as far as possible. Have special prayer favourites, such as the Litany of the Holy Name, the *Te Deum*, the *Miserere* (which might have been written by a Christian), etc., also ejaculatory prayers, and know many by heart; you will need them in illness when it will be too late to learn them. At night have your crucifix in your hand, and say the Sacred Name, with thanksgivings; meditate on the five sacred wounds. Say your Rosary, have a prayerful mind. Our Lord loves to give; yes, but he wishes to be asked, and without prayer the soul is starved.

THIRD DAY: I

Advice on *confession*.—Make it as though you were speaking at the feet of our Lord.

Advice on *Communion*.—As though it was to be your first or your last, followed by thanksgiving.

On the *Catholic Church*.—It is not founded on the teaching of the New Testament; in fact, during the first generation of the Church, the New Testament was not written. So many divergent views may be, and are, in fact, taken on the teaching of the Bible that agnosticism is the result. Religion is no longer taught in the State schools because the Teacher is no longer required. But the Catholic Church is founded upon a rock of stability and unity. When our Lord said he would give his Flesh to eat, many left him, and, turning to Peter, he asked if he also would go. Peter answered: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Again, on the occasion of S Peter’s confession, our Lord’s remarkable reply was: “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Here is given the promise of stability, which only a house built upon a rock or a strong foundation can maintain. So we know the Church is safe. Religious houses may be suppressed. Jesuits may be turned out of Italy or France, but it really matters not. So also S Teresa said: “After all I am a Catholic.” The gates of hell cannot prevail, for the Church is under divine protection and cannot err. The Church, therefore, remains on in spite of everything!

THIRD DAY : II

ON OUR LORD IN HIS RISEN LIFE

The disciples must have wondered what he would be like when they saw him again! Would he reproach them for their faithlessness? Would he tell Peter that after his denial another disciple should be made the head of his Church? But, no, he was just like his former self—simple, and even playful.

He calls Mary Magdalen by name—just “Mary”—and his words, “Touch me not,” probably referred to her overjoy at seeing him, and not that he did not wish to be touched. How kind towards S Thomas in his incredulity, even accepting his conditions for belief!

In dealing with S Peter he only asks, “Lovest thou me?” and then confides to him the protection of his whole flock.

Our Lord in his risen life had a glorified body, and so shall we be after the resurrection, not spirits, but possessed of glorified bodies.

NOTES OF RETREAT GIVEN AT THE
CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART,
HAMMERSMITH
(MARCH 24-25, 1917)

FIRST DAY: I

In your spiritual life the great question is, What are you to our Lord, and what is he to you?

Do you, when alone in your room, love your crucifix, and his five sacred wounds? Do you ask to love him more and ever more, and to love his blessed Mother, the saints, and your guardian angel? These are the things that matter.

In these days Marthas are more numerous than Marys, but, unless done for our Lord, works have their reward in our pleasure in doing them. We are all apt to forget the needs of our own souls in our work for others.

Put our Lord into your life. Unless he is there you cannot pass him on to others, for you cannot give what you have not got.

Offer everything to him. Your work, your pain, your sleepless nights for the holy souls.

FIRST DAY: II

It is a mistake to think that our feelings matter much. God looks not at our feelings, but at our will and our actions. Things done for him and to please

him, when personally we should prefer not to do them, are of more value than things we do under the influence of emotion. There are some things we have to do for ourselves—sleep, eat, pray. We shall never make progress in spiritual life without prayer, and if we do not go forward we are bound to go back. So ask for a greater love of our Lord, and for gratitude for all he has done for us. Ask for blessings for yourself and for others, and be sure that your prayers will not go unanswered in God's own good way and time. We should have a proper sense of proportion, and give God the first place.

Try and see, not what you can get, but what you can give to him.

Do not be put off by giving to trifling things of the world what rightly belongs to God. Think of his love, his sweetness, and his mercy. Do what you can for him, leaving the results with him.

Often we think our work is useless and a failure, when, in fact, it is quite otherwise.

Your visit to a sick person may seem almost an impertinence, but all the time it may be an immense help.

Go to our Lord often. He is always there in the Blessed Sacrament, although we neglect him so much. Perhaps for the sake of the few faithful ones he will overlook the neglect of the rest. There is no compulsion. He wants our love and our service *free*. Ask him to keep for you always a loving corner in his Sacred Heart.

Be patient with God and await his own good time.

SECOND DAY: I

Remember always that our Lord is human as well as divine, and that he likes us to approach him on his human side.

He knows us through and through, and remembers that we are but dust. He knows what we can give, and also what we are not capable of giving, as no one else knows it. Each separate person is an individual known to him and loved by him, as no one else knows and loves.

With all human love there is the fear of it lessening, but with our Lord no such fear exists. The question is not, "Will he cease to love me?" but rather, "Can I ever love him enough?"

During the coming season of the Passion take your crucifix into your hand, and ask yourself three questions: Who? What? Why?

Let his sufferings borne for each of us individually be ever present in our minds, with loving and grateful sympathy.

SECOND DAY: II

The Blessed Sacrament should fill our souls and fit them more for God.

Our Lord should have the first place in our hearts, and however much we may love him we should try to love him more, and study what it is he asks of us.

We should be enthusiastic in our love, in response to his enthusiastic love for us. "Behold! how much this Heart loved mankind," he said to Blessed Margaret Mary.

Love of the Sacred Heart will keep us in the Faith here, and will gain for us the rewards of heaven.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS
GIVEN AT THE CLOSE OF A MISSION TO
COSTERMONGERS AT CARLISLE
PLACE CONVENT
(MARCH 20, 1910)

WE have come to the last evening of our eight days' mission, and I am glad and proud at the regularity with which you have attended it, and not only that, but I am proud that you have made such good confessions and Communions. This is a grand thing! I understand your difficulties. I know that some of you have kept away for a long time, and a very great effort is needed when you feel that your life has been so very different from what is right. But never mind! The worse you have been the more necessary it is to put yourself right with God. There is nothing he is not willing to forgive provided you are contrite.

Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as wool, and so complete is his forgiveness that, "as far as the east is from the west," so far will he put your sins from you, if you will but come to him. The worse your life has been the greater will his forgiveness be. I know that this requires a struggle on your part. You must fight, and I am glad to think that you *have* fought yourselves and have won the victory. Now everything that was wrong in your past life is put right, forgiven and forgotten!

Our Lord is so fine in the grand way in which he deals with us! There is such a royal splendour in the manner in which he forgives. Our repented sins are all simply swept away, and we have the chance of making a fresh start.

We have the Faith to help us, that splendid Faith of the Catholic Church, that precious gift which we hold in every fibre of our being, and which makes heaven so real to us, and makes us determined to get there.

You have chosen the better part, and, brothers, I am proud of you!

The noble poor are God's aristocracy. People in the world are often proud of a long line of ancestry, but you have something better than that to be proud of. As Catholics you are the sons of God, his heirs, and as such you have a right to be with him, and to claim heaven as your home. See that you do nothing to forfeit that right. But you cannot get on without God. I have said it before. You cannot run a country, nor a government, nor a family, nor anything else without him.

Without God you can only run to one place, and that is hell!

Remember, because you are the sons of God, he owns you; you are a part of him, and partakers of his own divinity itself. Never forget this, and let the thought of it keep you away from everything that is wrong or bad.

People in the world are proud of riches, but riches do not bring happiness, and however much people in the world may possess, they always seem to wish they had a little more.

They are not like our Lord in this. He was a simple,

poor working man, and he makes you his working-men brothers. He gives you real riches and wealth, his grace with which to purchase heaven.

Money in itself does not bring happiness. Supposing that by a stroke of fortune each one of you were now to get £5,000 a year to spend. Do you think you would be any the better for it? How many do you think would come to this Retreat next year? How many of you would be here to come?

No! You are poor men, as your Master was poor, and he calls you brothers.

Bear your troubles well. I know how real they are and how great the temptation may sometimes be to take what could easily be taken, when you do not know where to turn for a meal, and the kiddies are crying for bread. A man told me that to avoid yielding in just such a case he took to his heels and ran, and never stopped till he was a mile away from the danger spot. How I admired that man! There was a true nobleman!

If we bear our troubles here well we shall have our reward in heaven. The cross will win us the crown. We can't expect the reward without earning it. When we appear on the threshold of heaven our Lord will say to us: "What have you done to get here?" and if you can only say that you have taken life easily, and have "arrived in a motor car," he will say: "Then heaven is no place for you. You haven't earned it." Our Lord had no possessions on earth, and he says: "Follow me." "Take up your cross."

As for the poor, deluded rich, don't envy them, don't wish to be like them, but pity them, and, above all, pray for them.

A SHORT RETREAT

(DATE AND PLACE UNCERTAIN)

THE great thing for us is to love God; so we must renew our fervour and get to know and to love him more and more.

“What am I before Jesus Christ, and what is he to me?”

These are the questions which matter, because our life throughout eternity will depend upon the answer.

He is our best and dearest friend, and his character is such a beautiful one!

Character lasts, whilst beauty, however fascinating, soon fades away.

Character is formed by the heart, the mind, and the will. Get to know our Lord's character—his Heart, so full of love, his will, the seat of power, used always in mercy, bringing the dead to life, commanding the sea and the winds, whereas he might have used it so differently in justice, instead of in mercy and forgiveness.

Nothing in heaven or earth is greater than love.

The definition of God is love, and if we had all the riches in the world without love they would count as nothing.

Let us prove our love here by serving him, so that when we come to die we may see him face to face as our exceeding great reward.

Love means service, for, if we really love anyone, we are ready to go through something for that person.

On earth love is service, and in heaven it will be triumph!

Does our Lord love me? Yes, he loves me as much as if no one else existed, and he gave me a soul to live with him hereafter for ever.

We know that love means service, so we must be prepared for suffering and trials.

He came down to earth to sacrifice himself for us, and he loved us and gave himself for us.

Nothing matters so long as God loves us, and we love God.

Let us study our crucifix to increase our love of our Lord. Let our love for him grow ever more and more; and if we have been a disappointment to him in the past, let us be so no longer.

Let us get a spiritual sunbath. Sit in his presence in the sunshine of his love.

Fight against sin, whether of thought, word, deed, or omission. Conquer self. Have courage to bear God's will.

In love our Lord is always ahead of us. He gave us all the beautiful things of earth, the trees, the flowers, the fruits, the rivers, the sea. He made the stars and the sun and moon, but all that was not enough, so God sent his only Son, and he showed us how to work and pray. He went about doing good, and died on the cross for our salvation. Finally, he reduces himself to the form of bread, for the nourishment and support of our spiritual life.

His whole life is there; his hidden life, his public life, his risen life; and the gift of the Blessed Sacrament is such that no words can fully express our thanks.

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VAUGHAN, BERNARD

AUTHOR

Notes of Retreats

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